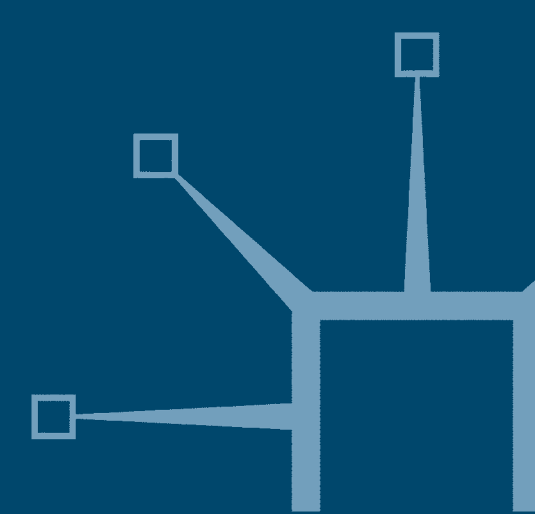
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Virginia Woolf's Bloomsbury, Volume 2

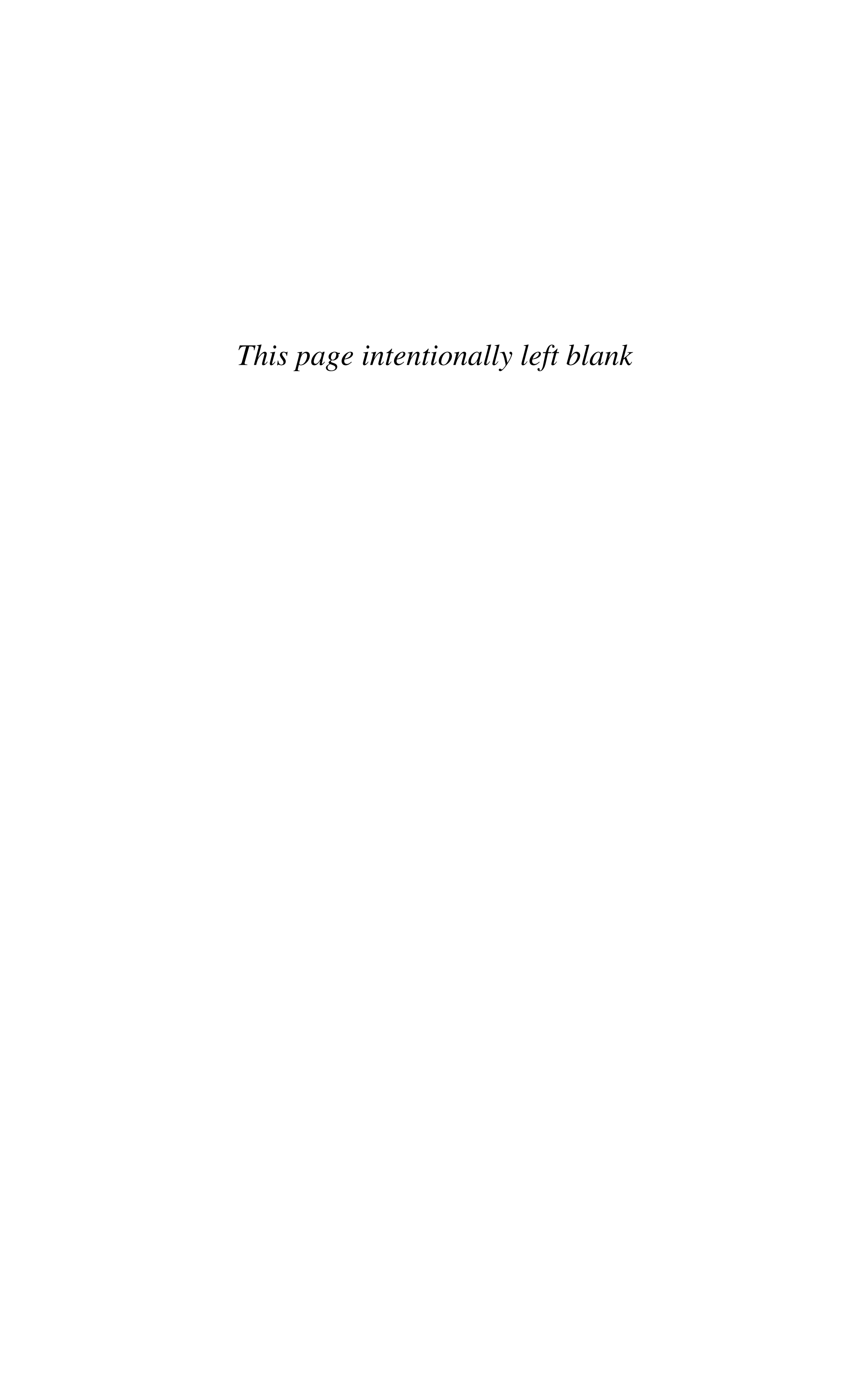
International Influence and Politics

Edited by

Lisa Shahriari and Gina Potts



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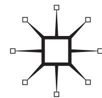
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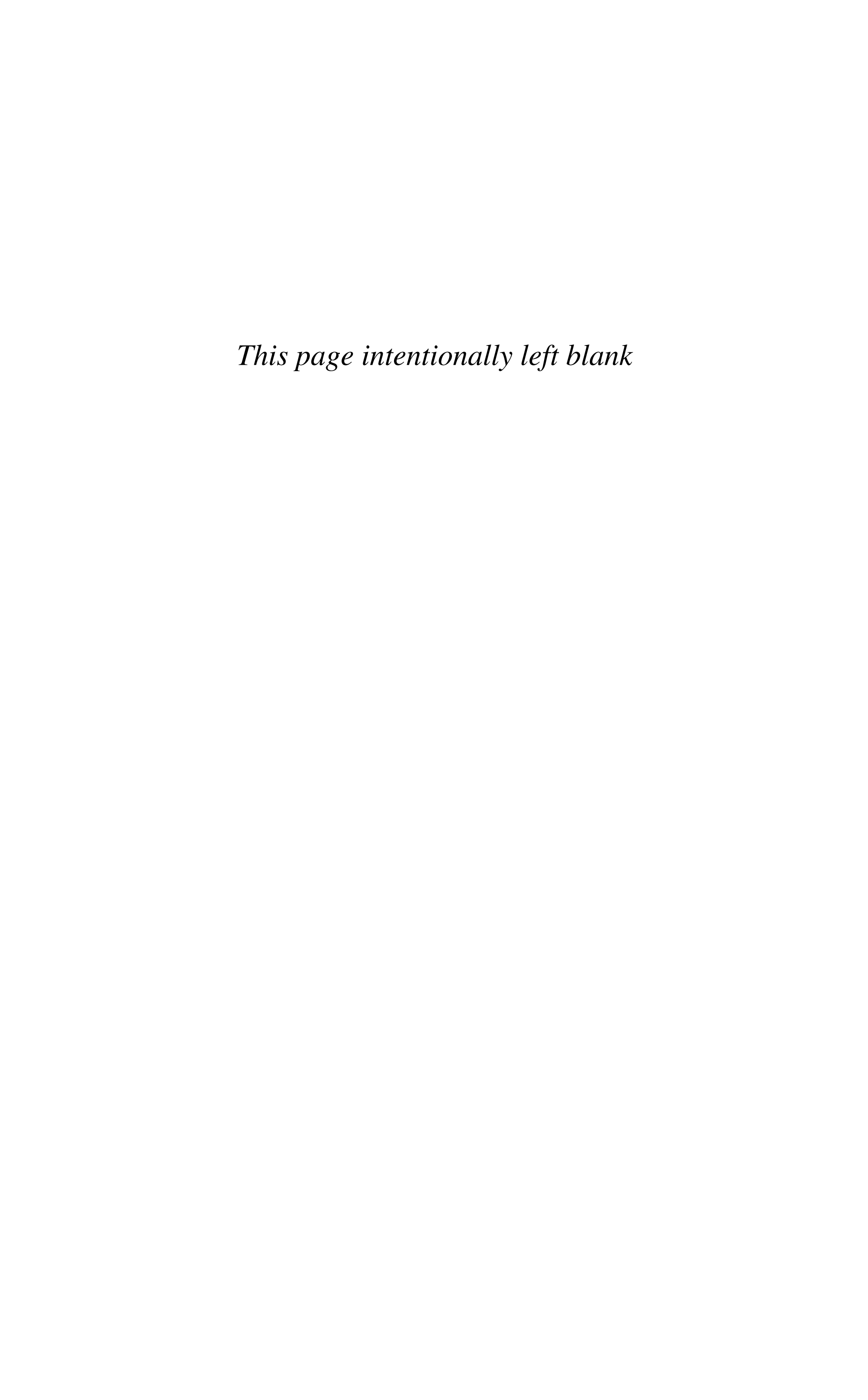
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Preface

The origins of the papers presented in both volumes of *Virginia Woolf's Bloomsbury* lie in the Fourteenth Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf which was hosted by the Institute of English Studies at the University of London in June 2004. The theme of that conference, 'Back to Bloomsbury', inspired a wide range of exceptional presentations, many of which focused on Woolf's politics and aesthetics. Many of the papers in this volume therefore have links with papers published in *Virginia Woolf's Bloomsbury, Volume 1: Aesthetic Theory and Literary Practice*. By sharing the common topic of Virginia Woolf and Bloomsbury, the papers in both volumes demonstrate the connections between aesthetics and politics in Woolf's work.

Michael Payne's discussion of Woolf's development of a political aesthetic and a performative language by its very nature could sit easily in either volume. Jane Goldman's interrogation of the literary and political history of the dog, read in conjunction with London's geography, highlight the paper's engagement with Woolf's politics and aesthetics. Goldman's paper can be insightfully read alongside Morag Shiach's "London Rooms", and Elisa Kay Sparks' "Leonard and Virginia's London Library: Mapping the Subterranean City" in Volume 1 because of their focus on London's geography. Makiko Minow-Pinkney's "Sketches of Carlyle's House by Two Visitors, a Young Virginia Woolf and a Japanese Novelist, Sōseki Natsume" in Volume 1, like Goldman's in this one, considers Virginia Woolf's visit to Carlyle's House. Anna Snaith's paper addressing colonial writers at the Hogarth Press can be read productively alongside Minow-Pinkney's paper and Kristin Czarnecki's "Comparative Modernism: The Bloomsbury Group and the Harlem Renaissance" to produce a broader, international understanding of modernism. This sense of internationalism in terms of both political and aesthetic engagement is continued in Melba Cuddy-Keane's paper which looks at the global circulation of ideas. Like Snaith's paper, the other papers in this volume addressing the Hogarth Press – specifically Elizabeth Willson Gordon's and Drew Patrick Shannon's – connect the politics and aesthetics of the Woolfs' lives and work to the Press.

Indeed the Hogarth Press runs as a leitmotif throughout this volume with scholars noting not only the origins and cultural value of the Hogarth Press, but also the Press's role in the dissemination of anti-war

and anti-imperial politics. In some ways, the Hogarth Press itself encapsulates the connection between aesthetic theory, literary practice and politics because it published a wide array of literary and political texts. The Press enabled not only the publication of Russian authors, Freud's complete works, experimental work that would otherwise go unpublished, and, of course, the work of Leonard and Virginia Woolf, but also the work of colonial writers and various political series including work by H. G. Wells, Benito Mussolini and Mulk Raj Anand. Virginia Woolf herself notes that by owning the Hogarth Press she was 'the only woman in England free to write what [she] like[d]' (*WD*, p. 81).

Many of the papers in this volume reflect upon the present moment, or rather the moment of the conference, June 2004. As Gillian Beer writes in this volume, 'When I proposed this title "Woolf in Wartime" in 2003 we were not quite at war, but events in Iraq since that time have spilled warfare through the civilian population there, and to some degree in other places in the world.' Since the conference, London has become the site of terrorist attacks by religious extremists, most notably on 7 July 2005 when four bombs were exploded across London during rush hour. One of those bombs exploded in Tavistock Square, near the site of one of Virginia Woolf's former homes. The hotel that now stands on the site of the Woolfs' home that was destroyed by bombs during World War II served as a triage centre in the aftermath of the 2005 bombings. Tavistock Square's statuary includes a statue of Mahatma Gandhi, a memorial to the victims of the Hiroshima bombing, a memorial to Conscientious Objectors, a memorial to Dame Louisa Aldrich-Blake (one of Britain's first women doctors), and a bust of Virginia Woolf which was unveiled on the final day of the 'Back to Bloombury' conference. The inscription on the memorial to Conscientious Objectors seems particularly pertinent to a book addressing Woolf and politics. It reads: 'To all those who have established and are maintaining the right to refuse to kill'. In considering Woolf's ongoing relevance to current political questions, one can see the tragic irony of the bombing in Tavistock Square; even in a square with memorials to those who worked for peace and change, the tragedy of human violence was enacted again. The question Woolf asked herself as a young girl, 'Just as I raised my fist to hit him, I felt: why hurt another person?' (*MB*, p. 71) returns again and again as our governments choose war rather than peace.

This volume begins by considering Woolf and war moving from local, spatially determined understandings of community toward the possibility of international networks and communities. Beginning with Gillian Beer's "Woolf in Wartime, and Townsend Warner too"

which looks at writing about war in Virginia Woolf's diaries and Sylvia Townsend Warner's diary and short fiction, Beer includes memories of World War II from her childhood. Noting the difference between the representation of World War I in Woolf's earlier novels as an absence, Beer underlines the presence of World War II in Woolf's domestic life recorded in her diaries, and the use of contemporary incidents in *Between the Acts*. Both Woolf's and Townsend Warner's work highlight the collapse of the town/country divide. Beer's reading of Woolf's and Townsend Warner's diaries and fiction reminds the reader of the ways in which World War II changed Britain's everyday life. The specific communities brought together by World War II each had different traditions and ways of life disrupted by the war: evacuees from the cities moved to rural communities, soldiers billeted in rural communities, and the rural communities themselves.

Continuing the consideration of Woolf and war, Judith Allen explores the parallels in print media during the run up to the current Iraq war and the years 1916–1938 in "Virginia Woolf, 'Patriotism', and 'our prostituted fact-purveyors."' Allen examines the ways in which journalism has been manipulated to aid government aims by producing a patriotism that does not allow for dissent. Drawing on sources as diverse as Leo Tolstoy, Arthur Ponsonby and Virginia Woolf, Allen considers the American government's manipulation of *The New York Times* in order to manufacture consent for the war in Iraq. Creating consent for war, and indeed waging war, requires ignoring the enemy's pain and humanity on a large scale. Michael Payne's "Woolf's Political Aesthetic in 'To Spain,' *Three Guineas*, and *Between the Acts*" identifies Woolf's engagement with another's pain as a political act. Payne contends that Woolf's empathic imagination informs her aesthetic in *Three Guineas* and *Between the Acts* creating a performative language. Woolf's empathic imagination recovers the sense of an other's humanity. We then move from specific wars to a consideration of cultural warfare marked by the image of the dog in Johnson, Carlyle and Woolf.

In "Who Let the Dogs Out? Samuel Johnson, Thomas Carlyle, Virginia Woolf, and the Little Brown Dog", Jane Goldman considers the history of dogs as a trope in literary and other representations. She identifies how the depiction of human beings as dogs dehumanises and colonises the other, and highlights how the image of the dog in Woolf's oeuvre shows a convergence of gender, race and class struggles. Her analysis is tied to specific places in London suggesting not only the local history necessary to understand the complexities of Woolf's use of the dog trope, but also the ways in which local history can point towards more global issues.

The volume then shifts its focus from war to economics and cultural production. Craufurd Goodwin uses an economist's approach to Bloomsbury in order to examine the Bloomsbury Group as if it were a think tank. In "Virginia Woolf as Policy Analyst", he considers Woolf's methodology for examining social problems. He highlights similarities in the stages John Maynard Keynes, Roger Fry, E. M. Forster and Virginia Woolf went through in formulating their social policies. Continuing the focus on economics, Kathryn Simpson's "Unpinning Economies of Desire: Gifts and the Market in "Moments of Being: 'Slater's Pins Have no Points'" draws on Mauss's gift theory to consider how the gift economy can work as an alternative to capitalism and mass production. Reading "Slater's Pins Have no Points" through this lens explicates the connection between heterosexuality and capitalism. The gift economy creates the possibility of what Simpson calls 'a new economy of desire for women' by allowing them to be subjects in the gift exchange rather than the gift to be exchanged between men. In looking at the gift economy and its juxtaposition with capitalism and mass production, Simpson also considers Virginia Woolf's role as owner of the Hogarth Press and woman writer.

Elizabeth Willson Gordon analyses the competing discourses surrounding the Hogarth Press in "How Should One Sell a Book? Production Methods, Material Objects, and Marketing at the Hogarth Press." Willson Gordon examines the ways in which the Hogarth Press marketed itself as a cultural institution that published works of note that would otherwise go unpublished, the story surrounding the creation of the Hogarth Press, and the Press's function as a commercial enterprise. Her consideration of the status of Hogarth Press publications addresses the Press's marketing strategies and how its publications achieved their status during Virginia Woolf's lifetime. Drew Patrick Shannon's "'The Book is Still Warm': The Hogarth Press in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" considers how aura accumulates in books, specifically Hogarth Press publications. Using Walter Benjamin's categories of art explicated in "Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", Shannon examines the place of the Hogarth Press's hand-printed books as art. Arguing that the context of the observer plays a role in bringing the aura of the original to reproductions like the Hogarth Press edition of *The Wasteland*, Shannon destabilises the distinction between the original and the aura that surrounds it, and the reproduction.

Anna Snaith reads Bloomsbury and the Hogarth Press in an international context with "*Conversations in Bloomsbury*: Colonial Writers and the Hogarth Press" by addressing the interaction of Mulk Raj Anand

and C. L. R. James with Bloomsbury. Her essay opens up British modernism as a disseminator of anti-colonial thought while recovering the Woolfs', particularly Leonard's, anti-colonial politics through the publication of colonial writers by the Hogarth Press. The interaction between Anand and James, and the writers they had come to London to meet suggests a two-way exchange of knowledge and experience which repositions British modernism in relation to the work of colonial writers. The repositioning, and even resizing, of the significance of British culture is key to the next paper in this volume.

Melba Cuddy-Keane's "World Modelling: Paradigms of Global Consciousness in and around Virginia Woolf" explores a way of viewing the world that allows for different voices and cooperation between different cultures and opinions. Cuddy-Keane considers a panoply of voices from British and American intellectual sources, as well as Russian and Indian. She highlights the need to acknowledge multiplicity and difference, not just between cultures but between individuals within the same culture too, and an understanding of the circulation of ideas within a global network. The circulation of ideas through talk is important not only to Cuddy-Keane's paper, but also to the papers by Anna Snaith and Brenda Silver in this volume. This sense of the significance of talk is important to Virginia Woolf's own understanding of Bloomsbury as constituted by talk, an understanding which informs Brenda Silver's paper.

In "Small Talk/ New Networks: Virginia Woolf's Virtual Publics" Brenda Silver discusses the ways in which the Internet has opened up notions of the public sphere. By focusing on the VWOOLF Listserv, an email discussion list, Silver considers the importance of talk and public space in the circulation of ideas. She describes the possibilities that email and the Internet provide, particularly in allowing for a fairly egalitarian space that enables individuals to engage the public sphere on their own terms across national and cultural boundaries. Looking beyond traditional understandings of 'community' and the 'public', Silver suggests the ways in which technology allows for identification and cooperation across boundaries of nationality, race, class or gender thereby building new communities through talk and the circulation of ideas. Indeed much of this volume concentrates on the creation of new communities and terms of identification whether necessitated by extreme circumstances as in Beer's paper, through the use of the empathic imagination, or by rethinking the interaction between cultural production, national boundaries and individuals. These two themes, community and identification, dominate aspects of Woolf's later work particularly *Between the Acts* and *Three Guineas*. Woolf, writing in her diary about her vision

for *Between the Acts* highlights the desire for both unity and difference: '"I" rejected: "We" substituted: to whom at the end there shall be an invocation? "We" ... composed of many different things ... we all life, all art, all waifs & strays – a rambling capricious but somehow unified whole' (*D*5, p. 135). Many of the papers in this volume look at the creation of '"we" composed of many different things' rather than community comprised by homogeneity. The struggle to create and maintain a heterogeneous sense of community and identification informs our larger, current political issues. The 7/7 bombers embraced an either/or sense of community to be British or to be Muslim. The invasion of Georgia by Russia raises another set of either/or questions in relation to community and identification. As an Iranian-American living in England, I look forward to a time when 'we' means 'we all life, all art, all waifs & strays – a rambling capricious but somehow unified whole'. The 'somehow' has yet to be thought into existence but by thinking of new terms of identification and new commonalities from which to create community 'a rambling capricious but somehow unified whole' becomes possible.

In the publication of both volumes of *Virginia Woolf's Bloomsbury*, we are conscious of the international readership that comprises both Woolf scholars and Woolf's Common Readers. The conference from which these papers originate attracted more than 300 delegates from around the world, and received notices by the *Times Literary Supplement*, the *Times Higher Education Supplement*, *The New York Times* and *El Mundo* (Madrid). Neither the conference nor these two volumes would have been possible without the support of an international community of Woolf scholars and enthusiasts. Their convergence upon Bloomsbury during the week that marked the centennial of the Bloomsbury Group was a joyous occasion that reinscribed the importance of place and the importance of talk to our understanding of Virginia Woolf's work. We hope that the papers in both volumes inspire, as the conference did, cultural exchange and the forging of new communities.

LISA SHAHRIARI

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These volumes are not single, solitary births but the work of many people: our contributors, the staff at the Institute of English Studies which hosted 'Back to Bloomsbury: the Fourteenth Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf', Dr Anna Snaith and Professor Maggie Humm whose experience and advice we drew upon, and our publisher Palgrave Macmillan. Thank you to them, and to the Trustees of the Literary Estate of Virginia Woolf for their guidance on quoting from the works of Virginia Woolf. We must also express our gratitude to Chris Hill and Robert Potts for their untiring patience and encouragement.

Notes on the Contributors

Judith Allen has taught at the University of Delaware, Penn State University and the University of Pennsylvania, and is currently associated with the Kelly Writers House at the University of Pennsylvania. She has published articles on Virginia Woolf, Michel de Montaigne and James Joyce, and has reviewed articles and books for the *Journal of Modern Literature*, the *Woolf Studies Annual*, and the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*. Her book *Virginia Woolf and the Politics of Language* will be published in 2010.

Dame Gillian Beer was the King Edward VII Professor of English Literature at the University of Cambridge and is President of the British Comparative Literature Association and the British Literature and Science Society. She is a Fellow of the British Academy and of the Royal Society of Literature. Among her books are *Darwin's Plots* (1983, 2000, 2009) and *Virginia Woolf: the Common Ground* (1996).

Melba Cuddy-Keane is Professor of English and a Northrop Frye Scholar at the University of Toronto. Her areas of specialisation are modernism, narratology, globalism/internationalism and ethics; her publications on Virginia Woolf include *Virginia Woolf, the Intellectual, and the Public Sphere* (2003) and the Harcourt annotated edition of *Between the Acts* (2008).

Jane Goldman is Reader in English Literature at the University of Glasgow. She is a General Editor of the Cambridge University Press Edition of the Writings of Virginia Woolf, for which she is editing *To the Lighthouse*, and author of *The Feminist Aesthetics of Virginia Woolf: Modernism, Post-Impressionism and the Politics of the Visual* (1998), *The Cambridge Introduction to Virginia Woolf* (2006), and *Modernism, 1910–1945: Image to Apocalypse* (2004). She is currently writing a book called *Virginia Woolf and the Signifying Dog*.

Craufurd D. Goodwin is James B. Duke Professor of Economics at Duke University. Recent publications include *Art and the Market: Roger Fry on Commerce in Art* (1998), "The Art of an Ethical Life: Keynes and Bloomsbury", in *The Cambridge Companion to Keynes* (2006), and "Maynard and Virginia: A Personal and Professional Friendship", in *Economists' Lives* (2007).

Micheal Payne is Professor of English Emeritus at Bucknell University. He is currently working on a second edition of *A Dictionary of Cultural and Critical Theory* for Blackwell.

Gina Potts completed her Ph.D. at Birkbeck, University of London in 2007. Her thesis, *Nomadic Subjects: the Writing of Virginia Woolf* examined the aesthetics and anti-essentialist politics of Woolf's writing from a Deleuzean perspective. Gina has interests in modern manuscripts and genetic criticism, and is on the Project Board for the Woolf Online Project. She has also worked on the history of women in higher education, and intellectual women of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Gina was co-organiser with Lisa Shahriari of 'Back to Bloomsbury: the Fourteenth Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf', and is co-editor of *Virginia Woolf's Bloomsbury*.

Lisa Shahriari received her Ph.D. in Literature from the University of Essex. Her thesis *'In her Nature or in her Sex': Virginia Woolf and the Politics of Difference* explored Woolf's subversion of contemporary notions of sexual difference. She was the reviewer of Woolf studies for the *Year's Work in English Studies* for work published 2004–2006. She is currently at work on a project examining prostitution and British women's intellectual lives. Lisa and Gina Potts organised 'Back to Bloomsbury: the Fourteenth Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf', and are co-editors of *Virginia Woolf's Bloomsbury.*

Drew Patrick Shannon is an Assistant Professor of English at the College of Mount St. Joseph in Cincinnati, Ohio, and he is currently working on a book-length study of Virginia Woolf's diaries. His other research interests include Margaret Atwood and Doris Lessing.

Brenda R. Silver, Mary Brinsmead Wheelock Professor at Dartmouth College, is the author of *Virginia Woolf Icon* (1999) and *Virginia Woolf's Reading Notebooks* (1983), as well as numerous articles. Her current projects include an exploration of popular fiction in the digital age and an examination of the role of network theory in Virginia Woolf's virtual afterlife.

Kathryn Simpson is Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Birmingham, teaching nineteenth- and twentieth- century fiction and film. Her research interests focus on the interrelationships of sexuality and creativity in the work of modernist women writers, specifically Virginia Woolf, H. D. and Katherine Mansfield. Her book *Gifts, Markets*

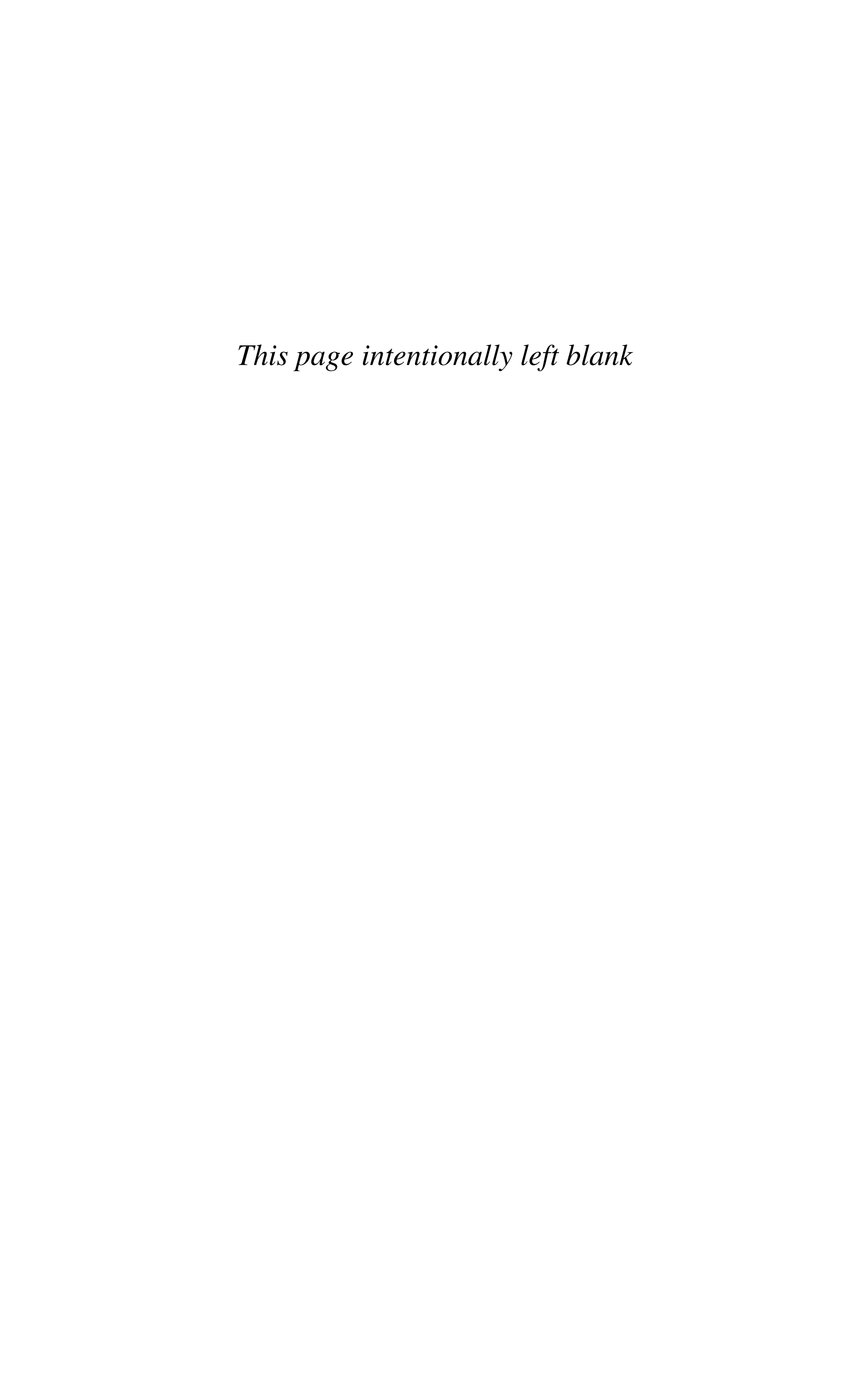
and Economies of Desire in Virginia Woolf was published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2008.

Anna Snaith is a Lecturer in English at King's College London. She is the author of *Virginia Woolf: Public and Private Negotiations* (2000), editor of *Palgrave Advances in Virginia Woolf Studies* (2007) and co-editor, with Michael Whitworth, of *Locating Woolf: The Politics of Space and Place* (2007). She is currently editing *The Years* for the Cambridge Edition of Virginia Woolf.

Elizabeth Willson Gordon recently defended her dissertation *Under the Imprint of the Hogarth Press: Material Texts and Virginia Woolf's Corporate Identity* and is teaching courses in modernist literature and twentieth-century women's writing at the University of Alberta. She has forthcoming articles on Woolf and the Hogarth Press and is currently at work on a project studying the Hogarth Press from 1941 to the present.

List of Abbreviations

AROO	Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*
BTA	Virginia Woolf, *Between the Acts*
CDB	Virginia Woolf, *Captain's Death Bed and Other Essays*
CH	Virginia Woolf, *Carlyle's House and Other Sketches*
*CR*1	Virginia Woolf, *The Common Reader*
CSF	Virginia Woolf, *The Complete Shorter Fiction of Virginia Woolf*
*D*1–5	Virginia Woolf, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf* (5 vols)
DM	Virginia Woolf, *The Death of the Moth and Other Essays*
F	Virginia Woolf, *Flush, A Biography*
HH	Virginia Woolf, *A Haunted House and Other Stories*
JR	Virginia Woolf, *Jacob's Room*
*L*1–6	Virginia Woolf, *The Letters of Virginia Woolf* (6 vols)
LS	Virginia Woolf, *The London Scene*
MB	Virginia Woolf, *Moments of Being*
MD	Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*
ND	Virginia Woolf, *Night and Day*
O	Virginia Woolf, *Orlando: A Biography*
PA	Virginia Woolf, *A Passionate Apprentice, The Early Journals 1897–1909*
RF	Virginia Woolf, *Roger Fry: A Biography*
TG	Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas*
TM	Virginia Woolf, *The Moment and Other Essays*
TTL	Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*
TW	Virginia Woolf, *The Waves*
TY	Virginia Woolf, *The Years*
VO	Virginia Woolf, *The Voyage Out*
WD	Virginia Woolf, *A Writer's Diary: Being Extracts from the Diary of Virginia Woolf*
WF	Virginia Woolf, *Women and Fiction*


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1
Woolf in Wartime, and Townsend Warner Too

Gillian Beer

The Hogarth Press on peace and war

Sometimes, looking back from this distance, it seems as if Woolf and her contemporaries were always 'in wartime', from the moment the First World War started in 1914 until – and beyond – her death in 1941. Long before and up to the onset of the 1939–45 war, warfare set Italy against Abyssinia, Japan against China, Franco against the elected Government in Spain, to name only some of the major conflicts. And brooding over the whole period was the hope and then the failure of the League of Nations, and the USA's refusal to join it. Writing to Shena, Lady Simon, in 1940 Woolf remarks: 'What the Americans want from me is views on peace. Well, these spring from views on war' (*L*6, p. 379).

Recently several valuable studies have appeared concerned with Woolf and the First World War: Karen Levenback, *Virginia Woolf and the Great War* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1999), Jonathan Atkin, *War of Individuals: Bloomsbury Attitudes to the Great War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), and Vincent Sherry, *The Great War and the Language of Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).[1] All these studies centre on the earlier twentieth century.[2] But the First World War was only the beginning, albeit traumatic, of Virginia Woolf's involvement in issues of war and peace, an involvement that reached its most excruciatingly personal climax in the death of her nephew Julian Bell in July 1937, driving an ambulance during the Spanish Civil War, a war that then merged almost without interruption into the wholesale horror of the Second World War.[3]

'How in your opinion are we to prevent war?': that question Woolf left unanswered for more than three years, so she declares at the beginning of *Three Guineas* (*TG*, p. 7). It was addressed to her in a letter from

a lawyer, a man, one who was, like her, 'a member of the educated class'. She responded to the implications of the question, and the questioner's assumption of solidarity in that 'we', with radical – and elliptical – passion in *Three Guineas* (1938). The question haunts us still, and particularly, now. When I proposed this title "Woolf in Wartime" in 2003 we were not quite at war, but events in Iraq since that time have spilled warfare through the civilian population there, and to some degree in other places in the world. Tavistock Square, Woolf's home ground in London, was the site of a terrorist bus bomb in 2005 and though warfare is not manifest here in London today, conflict is experienced in the bone and brain each day in too many places across the world. The word 'war' is forced into service by governments as a guarantor of willed violence. 'War' becomes itself the justification of conflict.

Virginia and Leonard Woolf were preoccupied with issues of war and peace throughout their life together.[4] When Leonard presented a Fabian pamphlet on possible future international government in 1916 the manuscript was written in Virginia's hand, so intimately was she involved not only as scrivener but as co-thinker.[5] During the 1920s Virginia and Leonard at the Hogarth Press issued a series of pamphlets that included Francis Pollard, *War and Human Values* (1928) and *In Retreat* (1928), Herbert Read's excruciating moment by moment account of a retreat in which he took part near the end of the First World War. He had tried to publish it immediately after the war,

> but the state of the public mind, or at least, of that mind as localised in the mind of publishers and editors, refused anything so bleak. The war was still a sentimental illusion: it was a subject for pathos, for platitude, even for rationalisation. It was not yet time for the simple facts. (Read, 1928, p. 7)

Instead, Read's manuscript came to the Woolfs at the Hogarth Press in the mid-1920s. It describes the deathly tiredness, the sense of being abandoned, the muddle and exhaustion, the refusing to share food and drink, and the bitterness of men at the end of their tether. This was the shattering milieu out of which emerged Septimus Smith in *Mrs. Dalloway*:

> We moved down the back slope of the mound. At the foot we found a stream or flow-off from the canal, about ten feet wide and apparently very deep. As we hesitated, looking for a convenient crossing, a machine-gun a few hundred yards away opened fire on is. There

> were a good few trees about which must have obstructed the 36 firer's view: the cut twigs, newly budded, fell into the water. We hesitated no longer: we plunged into the stream. The men had to toss their rifles across, many of which landed short and were lost. The sight of these frightened men plunging into the water effected one of those curious stirrings of the unconscious mind that call up some vivid scene of childhood: I saw distinctly the water-rats plunging at dusk into the mill-dam at Thornton-le-Dale, where I had lived as a boy of ten.
>
> The water sucked at my clothes as I met it, and filled my field-boots. They seemed weighted with lead now as I walked, and oozed for hours afterwards. (Read, 1928, pp. 35–6)

The same pamphlet series, Hogarth Essays, included Leonard's own proto-*Animal Farm* satire, *Fear and Politics: a Debate at the Zoo* (1925). Here all the animals argue about peace and war until the debate, and the book, is ended by the elephant's magisterial comment that freedom is impossible since all animals are fearful and man the most fearful of all. Later, in *Three Guineas* (1938) Virginia Woolf will refuse to accept that state of fear as permanent and 'natural'. She there assures her readers that women, and future generations of men educated in new ways, 'can use that mind and will to abolish the inhumanity, the beastliness, the horror, the folly of war' (*TG*, p. 151).

The Woolfs also published in the same Hogarth Essays series H. G. Wells's *Common Sense of World Peace: an address delivered in the Reichstag at Berlin on April 15, 1929* (1929). The pamphlets in the series were typically preoccupied with discovering the means for peace or demonstrating the horrors of war. But the case of Wells is intriguing. This is the same H. G. Wells who in 1913 published a curious work entitled *Little Wars: A Game for Boys From Twelve Years of Age to One Hundred and Fifty and For that more intelligent sort of girls who like boy's games and books With an Appendix on Kriegspiel by H. G. Wells the author of "Floor Games" and several minor and inferior works*. The Appendix on 'Kriegspiel' [wargaming] takes up with alacrity a soldier's suggestion that it could be developed as a 'Kriegspiel of real educational value for junior officers'. Wells's justification is: 'If Great War is to be played at all, the better it is played the more humanely it will be done.'

Wells's 1913 *Little Wars* expresses many of the attitudes that Virginia Woolf still had to combat in 1938, including the airy sexism of the subtitle and the racism of the cover illustration,[6] and even his *Common Sense of World Peace* harbours a bluff set of realpolitik assumptions continuous with his earlier game.

In *Three Guineas* Woolf was painfully, stridently, aware of the sheer *inertia* of the assumptions that underpin war. Leonard Woolf had pinpointed the problem in an arresting passage in *After the Deluge* in 1931:

> Thousands of Men died for a 'Germany' or 'France' which was not their idea of Germany or France. These were all in great part dead men's ideas, thought and fought over generations, sometimes centuries, ago . . . At every particular moment it is the dead rather than the living who are making history, for politically individuals think dead men's thoughts and pursue dead men's ideals. (L. Woolf, 1931, p. 30)

'I feel like a scientist who has to wait in a queue to get to the laboratory – while both the laboratory and he are under bombardment' (Sylvia Townsend Warner, *Diary*, 1940, p. 105)

Dead knowledge and dead experience dominate the living, Leonard Woolf observes. Virginia Woolf longs to find ways of challenging these rigid death-dealing categories. In her late work she explores alternatives, not only through the polemic of *Three Guineas* but through fiction and through the spontaneous reflection explored in her diaries.

In this discussion of Woolf in wartime I investigate how in her late works and particularly in her Diary she tries to find ways through and past the bombing and the threat of invasion by seeking new forms of writing and community in the midst of destruction. Her letters about the war, in contrast, often use bracing understatement or even chirpy asides. I want, too, to make some comparison with the ways in which Sylvia Townsend Warner wrote about these subjects in the same period, both in fiction and in her diary. And – since as a young child I was also there – I will remember some of that experience as well.

The war collapsed the polarisation of town and country. Leonard and Virginia Woolf moved to and fro between Sussex and London, in the midst of bombing raids in both places, and always under the threat of imminent invasion: these were shared, unavoidable experiences, in common with everyone in Britain. The English pastoral was no longer secure; the countryside was not exempt. The fates of town and country were intertwined: bombing was occurring anywhere that fighters could unload their bombs after raiding the cities, and the expected invasion was imminent.

Being alive in the English countryside during the 1939–45 war meant living in a motley group, some shaken out of their ordinary places, and with all the ordinary prejudices of the inhabitants shaken out like washing for everyone to see. Villagers, child evacuees billeted on them,

soldiers or airmen from far away camped on the edge of the community, and people who fled the cities or – like teachers – had been detailed to accompany children, all suddenly became part of country living. Anyone who was a child then will remember things the adults of the time do not recount: aeroplane glass, collected in fragments from bombers crashed in nearby fields, the glass green and opaque as if washed by the sea; the prickly filaments inside rose-hips gathered for their vitamin C; the damp graveyard interior of gasmasks – even the infant Mickey Mouse kind; alternating crowds of white or black American soldiers occupying the camp up the hill, never at the same time; the homely thud of bombs. I recall all these from a Somerset childhood.

The invasions feared, and experienced, were not from the Germans only: that last invasion mercifully never happened though it was present in people's daily fears:

> Very still and warm today. So invasion becomes possible. Smoke was going up like a picture on the house over the hill in Piddinghoe. The river high; all softly blue and milky: autumn quiet – 12 planes in perfect order, back from the fight, pass overhead. (*D*5, p. 324)

The other invasions did occur: the coming of the children, of the soldiers, of the urban dwellers, of bombs jettisoned at random, all profoundly unsettled country communities across social class. Some of the incomers were greeted with flags, affection, or indifference, some with cruelty, all with distrust. Woolf herself was equivocal in her feelings for refugees, complaining about their presence, about the possibility of having them billeted on her, refusing at first to send a manuscript to an auction – but then in fact sending the manuscript of *Three Guineas*, a fine gift after her grumbles and an appropriate one. That double reflex was not uncommon among many people of the time in Britain. The countryside was not sequestered from the war: some women writers, including Woolf, understood the degree to which they were taking part in a process after which England would never be the same again, where town and country experience would not be clearly separate.

Woolf's writing is hemmed in by two wars: 1914–18 and, for her, 1939–41 when she killed herself, not 1939–45. Indeed, for her the Second World War began in 1939 and continued without end, since she died in the midst of war not knowing how or when or *if* it would cease. In her earlier novels the war is represented as absence: Jacob's absence from his room, the absence of the Ramsay family from their holiday house in the "Time Passes" episode of *To the Lighthouse*. In *Mrs. Dalloway* Septimus

Smith is returned to civilian life but still trapped inside his war experiences. In *The Years* Woolf evokes the First World War with an account of a Zeppelin raid experienced from the group sheltering in a cellar.

In *Between the Acts* she poises the story on a single day in June 1939, just before the war breaks out at the beginning of September. The writing of that novel overlaps with the finishing of *Three Guineas*, her most polemical attack on patriarchy and militarism, and the education of young men for war. *Between the Acts* was written from April 1938 through to late November 1940: that is, it was composed through the period of waiting for war, through the 'Phoney' war, the Battle of Britain, and the Blitz.

> *Sunday 17 November [1940]*
> Butter stolen yesterday; Louie says 'You are too well liked for any villager to take it – Had it been Mr Coates ...' This flatters us. A fight over Knotts Bushes. 6 little companies of exclamation marks. Supposed to be the shrapnel after the air gun shell. Two loud explosions. A great chase, & all the farm out watching. Dumb Thompsett making wild attempts at comment. (*D*5, p. 339)

On the day she finished writing the novel (Saturday, 23 November, 1940) they succeeded in separating out a small pat of butter from a jug of milk: 'This was a moment of great household triumph' (*D*5, p. 340). She used the joy of that frugal event (remember that butter was very severely rationed during the war) to express her pleasure in her new method in *Between the Acts*, less whey, more concentration, 'a richer pat'.

She drew into *Between the Acts* a number of contemporary incidents: the attempted accord with Hitler at Munich, the French prime-minister Daladier and the financial crisis, an actual trial (the rape of a young girl by soldiers), Queen Mary and the Duke of Windsor meeting. At the same time the work broods on England and Englishness across the centuries, particularly the relation of town and country, island and Europe, urban and pastoral, the anonymous voices of all classes of people surviving in the communal language and turning it to new conditions. She blends these, using some of the techniques recently developed by Humphry Jennings, Charles Madge and Tom Harrison in mass-observation. They took, for example, a single day, 12 May 1937, and collected the opinions of ordinary people on Coronation Day. The undersong of Woolf's technique is: will all this vanish away? Is this the time of apocalypse? Such thoughts for the novelist are most intensely expressed through the contingent and the everyday.

Sylvia Townsend Warner in her diaries was haunted by those questions too: 'Counterpointing the war is the loveliest summer I have ever known' she writes on 18 June 1940 (Townsend Warner, 1994, p. 106). Being at war in the countryside, whether in Sussex or Dorset, during those early years of the war was to experience both the contraction of the local and the vanishing of boundaries. Townsend Warner describes the uncanny imminence of radio news thus:

> I think the giving of news by wireless, which is *non-geographical*, has tended to give the war-news something of the quality of news of a pestilence. It has made it, in a fashion, an atmospheric rather than a territorial phenomenon. (Townsend Warner, 1994, p. 104)

Just before that passage Townsend Warner captures the intensity at once of threat and evasion in the war experience as people waited for the invasion:

> Probably people in the country are being quite fairly courageous but it is a courage of incomprehension. The direct military effect of war, just being killed or maimed, does not yet have any meaning for them; and the other aspects, hunger, poverty, famine, slow ruin, are not shown to them by any propaganda. 'Look out for the parachutists', say the official spokesmen; and the bulk and blackness of the clouds *behind* the parachutists are – it is hoped – to pass unperceived by people looking out for parachutists. I suppose if a government were to stress the long-term effects of war no country would undertake a war.
>
> Actually, I think people here would be much more frightened if the Germans were the Black Death. Then the news – the Black Death is in Rouen, in the Channel ports, has appeared in Paris, would set people thinking: soon I may catch it, and die. (Townsend Warner, 1994, p. 104)

Townsend Warner evokes the lassitude of incomprehension, the creeping fatality, the propaganda nursery injunctions 'Look out for parachutists'. All these contribute to the fantastic paradox of a non-geographical threat that may soon become a physical invasion. This fantasy takes place in the midst of billeting evacuees and being billeted on, gardening, digging trenches, planting onions, sleeping out 'under the apple tree' with the nightingale singing from '10 pm to 5 am'. Then the sounds of war come on:

> 19th: In bed I heard a new aeroplane noise, and said it might be a German.

> 20th: And it was: a steady *unrhythmical* engine noise. It flew north, may be the one that visited South Wales. (Townsend Warner, 1994, p. 106)

The bombing has started and in the entries for 1941 is recorded as incessant on nearby West Country towns and cities:

> The night very noisy with bombers ... One, flying very low, went over and came back, like a dog that has overrun the scent. It was so low that we could hear the noises of the engines as well as the noise [. . .] (*sic*). (Townsend Warner, 1994, p. 108)

Intimate closeness, sounds inside the head, blur boundaries. The bomber seems inside as well as outside the house, alongside as well as above, a familiar animal. Woolf writes in her diary for 29 September 1940 in eerily similar terms:

> A bomb dropped so close I cursed L. for slamming the window. I was writing to Hugh, and the pen jumped from my finger. Raid still on. It's like a sheep dog, chasing a fox out of the fold. You see them yapping and biting and then the marauder, dropping a bone, a bomb towards Newhaven, flies. (*D*5, p. 325)

Woolf tames the fear by imagining the protective sheep dog. Leonard Woolf was acting by night as a volunteer fire-man so that they found themselves on the front-line of anxiety for the neighbourhood.

Townsend Warner curses the war in particular because this is not the war that should have been. Townsend Warner had been briefly in Spain and had worked hard and long against the Fascists. This war, for her, is a kind of delay:

> For war, this sort of war, is no way to attack fascism. And I am fretted to think how every day my chances of seeing other methods tried out are diminishing. I feel like a scientist who has to wait in a queue to get to the laboratory – while both the laboratory and he are under bombardment. (Townsend Warner, 1994, p. 105)

Townsend Warner adopts a familiar domestic situation in wartime – queuing for provisions – to express the urgency of her larger political frustration. The social experiment she has lived for may not now take place within her lifetime, or the lifetime of her community, since who knows what will survive. Yet Townsend Warner becomes active in the

social experiments of war in the countryside: organising the reception of evacuees, housing them, joining the Women's Voluntary Service, billeting soldiers, going up and down the coast in her van with her beloved Valentine delivering goods for soldiers, taking part in mock invasion days. Her trenchant pen is always ready to record the absurdities, and seize the terrors.

In her collection of short stories, published by Chatto and Windus in 1943, *A Garland of Straw,* she shows how cunning, privation, ordinary pleasure, and humdrum anxieties are fine-tuned to each other within the suspense of wartime: the drone of bombers and the sound of the wind merge and overlap in the story called "Setteragic on" [No cigarettes]. In the war things are reversed and inverted; apparently small needs grow uncontrollable: the beat of need for cigarettes, for under-the-counter freedoms. Many of her stories take an incident almost flush with the surface of what we expect, but twist it to show the ordinary as a precious possession. Others are preoccupied with incomprehension between individuals and groups. The most telling of all these secretive stories is "Noah's Ark." A young brother and sister turn up as evacuees. Their hosts expect them to appreciate the pastoral privilege of being in the countryside: 'Why, it will be a new world to them! They can pick wild flowers and look at the birds and the lambs. I dare say they've never even seen a lamb' (Townsend Warner, 1943, p. 85). But the children want to talk about air-raids; they are made to stop: 'It would make them morbid'. The lambs do not impress them: 'grey and spotty-looking' (p. 86). They tell instead of a fantastic menagerie of animals, weaving stranger and stranger, though accurate, descriptions of tigers and polar-bears and crocodiles. The self-righteous countrywoman Mrs Purefoy at last finds the cure and Townsend Warner brilliantly indicates her vengeance in the word 'almost' in the passage below: 'an almost genuine benevolence'.

> It was dreadful for the poor little things to be so obsessed by all those awful creatures they had been driven to take up with because town life had no natural pleasures for children, and that she only prayed it wouldn't come out in their dreams. Indeed, at the last it was with an almost genuine benevolence that she handed a copy of the paper across the table.
>
> 'Here's something you'll be interested in, my dears.'
>
> Beside a small paragraph her thumbnail had made a deep indentation. *Owing to the continuance of the blitz bombing the authorities of the Plymouth Zoo have caused all the dangerous animals to be destroyed.* (Townsend Warner, 1943, p. 92)

Only in the sardonic desolation of that ending does the reader fully guess what the opening would have told us, had we heard: these are lone survivors of the earlier bombing in Plymouth. No mother will ever appear 'to unsettle them'. The price of accommodating to war and to country life is astronomically high for the children wrenched away to safety.

In Virginia Woolf's last novel all these burdens, of comprehension, bombs, history, oppression, are registered and scattered. The first readers of the work encountered it in the wake of Woolf's suicide in 1941. When invasion seemed imminent Leonard and Virginia had agreed that it would be best to shut the garage doors and gas themselves if the invasion happened. Leonard was Jewish, and Virginia therefore also, according to Hitler's categorisations, a Jew. They were moreover prominent left-wing intellectuals.[7] In the event Woolf's suicide took place not as a joint act of determined policy, but alone in the river and in fear of her madness coming on again. It was subjected afterwards to public abuse as 'unpatriotic'. Townsend Warner read *Between the Acts* when it appeared in 1942, after Woolf's death.

> At Boots Library the young woman put into my hands Virginia Woolf's last book. And I received an extraordinary impression how light it was, how small, and frail. As though it were the premature-born child, and motherless, and, literally, the last light handful remaining of that tall and abundant woman. The feeling haunted me all day. (Townsend Warner, 1994, p. 113)

That bereft response came before she had read the work, and almost certainly while she was imagining "Noah's Ark" with its motherless children, its blight, its mordant humour. Woolf's book fans across pain, apocalypse and pleasure, in the lightest of motions. It is more robust and more full of comedy than Townsend Warner's description imagines in advance from the slightness of the book's scale. I wish we knew what Townsend Warner felt after she had read it.

Between the Acts describes a day in the life of a village in the throes of producing the annual pageant in mid-June 1939.[8] War is imminent, though only one of the characters Giles Oliver, is alert to its coming. The novel moves consecutively through a single day, and back and forth through mind time between the primordial and the present. The instigator and creator of the pageant is, in contrast to most of the village characters, from outside mainland Britain. Miss La Trobe comes from the Channel Islands, half way to France (and the only British territory to be occupied by the Nazis during the war). Miss La Trobe

re-designs the traditional pageant, doing away with the imperial tableau of the military at the end and turning it instead into a moment when people must see themselves, caught reflected in broken shards of glass and mirrors. Near the book's ending she foresees her next project: it bears an uncanny resemblance to the book we are reading in its backward sweep through time and its placing of the primeval in simultaneity with the present. England is set in obscure alliance with some fundamental nameless place before words were. Is this threat or comfort?

Before nation, building, family, the island now called England existed as swamp, forest, curve of land and hemming sea. That primitive landscape may seem remote from the garden-party atmosphere of the village's day but the work skeins them together in ways that give different meanings to England and Englishness, meanings that might survive the coming obliteration of bombing, invasion and all-out war. The book continues past mirrors into the coming of night and the return of darkness – darkness that is primeval now as always. Within each twenty-four hours, in the country, in the blackout of war, the world returns to unchanged darkness, grained with the events of the night sky. Nowadays, in cities and throughout our land with light pollution, we may scarcely notice that recurrence. But in the time during which Woolf was writing this book darkness at night was absolute, the throb of planes curdling it. And she chooses an ironic pointer to that coming darkness: the villagers are raising funds for electric light in their church. Soon all light will be quenched by the defensive official blackout required to avoid giving pointers to the bombers overhead.

The book shows the deep value of recurrence: things that come back – swallows, village fetes, clichés, phrases recalled, even 'Orts, scraps, and fragments' – all in their different pulses promise continuity. Not all things survive. Buildings blasted are gone. People blasted are gone. In the time-setting of the novel these are feared events, not yet happened: Giles thinks: 'At any moment guns would rake that land into furrows; planes splinter Bolney Minster into smithereens and blast the Folly' (*BTA*, p. 53). By the time the novel was finished many such events had occurred.

If apocalypse means prophecy, as well as – a more recent sense – disaster, Woolf's work, lying in that warp of time made possible by the performance of tense in narrative, is a prophecy that England, Europe, may not survive the war that has begun. The insistent allusions to Shakespeare's sceptical drama *Troilus and Cressida* remind the reader that in truth great cities *are* sacked, and nations *do* cease to be. Thus, despite all her dislike of the hectoring grandeur of patriarchy and

imperialism bound into the idea of England, so passionately argued in *Three Guineas*, Woolf must find a scale on which to represent all that which, unendurably, might be lost in this war. The community is netted together by humour, recurrence, trivial phatic phrases, children, weather forecasts, and the deep pond where the ageless pike rise from time to time to the surface. This is the world of 'Anon', the final vocabulary of history and pre-history gathered in the voices and speech of the people. This she seeks to save, for the moment, by making her book.

Woolf's diary: 'Yesterday the river burst its banks'

As Woolf wrote the village pageant the bombs dropped nearby, in Sussex and in London alike. The whole of life was contingent, often absurd at this time, and she laughs at herself as she recognises the false connections made between ego and abyss:

> Why do I mind being beaten at bowls? I think I connect it with Hitler. Yet I played very well. And in an hours [*sic*] time, shall be repeating the other phrase wh. I made during the first game: a Season of calm weather . . . Yet 'they' say the invasion is fixed for Aug. 16th. (*D*5, p. 307)

A side-long glance at Sir Francis Drake delaying his contact with the Spanish Armada for the sake of a game of bowls gives a frisson of mock-heroic to her irritation. She and Leonard were living a country life not quite as evacuees, or refugees, but always a little outside the flow of village life. They were town-dwellers too, neither quite fully in one place or the other.

On 8 September 1940 their flat in Mecklenburgh Square, Bloomsbury, was bombed. The Hogarth Press was largely destroyed. On Thursday 17 October the house in Tavistock Square where she and Leonard had long lived (they still held a lease) was obliterated in another bombing raid. When Woolf heard of these losses she felt exhilaration and freedom as well as dismay: 'the relief at losing possessions' (*D*5, p. 332). Visiting London to find out the extent of the destruction to the houses Woolf saw something that troubled her imagination:

> The most – what? – impressive, no, that's not it – sight in London on Friday was the queue, mostly children with suitcases, outside Warren Street tube. This was about 11.30. We thought they were evacuees waiting for a bus. But there they were, in a much longer line, with women,

> men, more bags, blankets, sitting still at 3. Lining up for the shelter in the night's raid – which came of course. Thus, if they left the tube at 6 (a bad raid on Thursday) they were back again at 11. So to Tavistock Square. With a sigh of relief saw a heap of ruins. (*D*5, pp. 330–1)

Dread accomplished, and lessened; dread prolonged and habitual: the children queuing for the shelter of the underground disturbed Woolf in a way that the anticipated end of her own house did not. Life closed up in its round of passivity and violence.

These experiences changed Woolf's thoughts on England. The Woolfs, like all the inhabitants of the island, were 'in for it now'. The outsider's stance was not enough. In *Three Guineas* she had asserted that as a woman she 'had no country', 'was no patriot' (*TG*, p. 197). But her love of place, and of anonymous people, tied her too much that, ideologically, she might resist. Above all, London and the countryside were inhabited by all the voices of the past and the present, by the unknown populace whose gossip provided Shakespeare and Keats with their tongues, and whose own speech was enriched by the language generated by poets.

Her last book, written alongside the final stages of *Between the Acts* was to be 'Anon', a study of that universal genius formed from the speech of forgotten people and sustained in the listening and reading of forgotten people.[9] Her diary entries revive in staccato half-sentences the unknown – almost unknown – people of the London blitz. The long entry of Tuesday 10 September brings forward 'the garage man at the back', Mr Pritchard, Miss Perkins, Mrs Jackson, alive, and the lost inhabitants of the flats opposite, gone: 'The house is still smouldering. That is a great pile of bricks'(*D*5, p. 316).

> We saw Sage Bernal with an arm band jumping on top of the bricks – who lived there? I suppose the casual young men & women I used to see, from my window; the flat dwellers who used to have flower pots & sit on the balcony. All now blown to bits. ... The people I think of now are the very grimy lodging house keepers, say in Heathcote Street; with another night to face: old wretched women standing at their doors; dirty, miserable. Well – as Nessa said on the phone, its coming very near. (*D*5, pp. 316–17)

The bombs make no distinctions. Woolf herself draws near, experiencing now in empathy the fate of 'casual young' and the 'old wretched women' equally, alive and dead alike. And in the midst of horrors she

also experiences passages of happiness. One of Woolf's most loved walks near their home in Sussex was beside the marshes. In November the bombs breached the dykes and flooded the marshes. The river melded with the sea. This might seem destruction and outrage but to Woolf the loss of contours seemed like restoration. The sea's invasion pacified her. 'Yesterday the river burst its banks. The marsh is now a sea with gulls on it. Another break in the bank. It comes over in a cascade; the sea is unfathomable' (*D*5, p. 335).

In real terms, the water's spread is full of menace since Britain's island state still seems its last bulwark against invasion. Woolf is writing in bursts, mixing, swamping, in shorthand sentences. The systole and diastole of water spreading, village life contracting, together renew her sense of England, this island whose sea defences are persistently breached, yet whose villages cluster inland ('I imagine a village invasion. Queer the contraction of life to a village radius'(*D*5, p. 329). But it would be to romanticise village life in a way that Woolf avoids if it seemed all wholesome gain. She was exasperated by the Women's Institute, of which she yet became Treasurer. She hated the dowdy plays they performed, without imagination. Soon after her arrival in the village she was asked to write a play. She demurred. But *Between the Acts* is the replacement offering. It mocks the pretensions of village life but opens with talk of a cess-pool. The opening scene is full of the profound world of small talk – talk that blithely moves across the surface, on the surface tension, of life and death, water, defecation, the summer's night. The book ends twenty-four hours later in 'the fields of night' where rage and desire link human to animal life: 'Before they slept, they must fight; after they had fought, they would embrace. From that embrace another life might be born. But first they must fight, as the dog fox fights with the vixen, in the heart of darkness, in the fields of night' (*BTA*, p. 219).

That sombre ground-note is overlaid with many forms of evanescence and recurrence. In the course of the book England proves to be at once a present crisis, a long extended route across the world laden with booty in colonialism, and a gathering of knowledges so old and various that they chime together best in nonsense, place-names, rhymes and music. The voices of the afternoon include the bellow of the cows, the scream of swallows, the cheerful exclamations of the village 'natural', the idiot boy, and the cries of the raped girl who Isa encounters in the pages of the *Times* (and who was an actual person). All these knowledges declare themselves in places, soon, Woolf feared, to be ravaged, perhaps by soldiery, perhaps by bombers which swoop overhead and away, disengaged from consequence. The vicar's voice at the end of the pageant

is drowned by aeroplanes passing overhead, like wild geese, in battle formation.

Woolf could not foresee an ending that left England intact. She was right, of course. The late imperial world of the English village she described was going then, and has gone. But the airy, musing, often comic measure of *Between the Acts* suggests that continuity may best be poised by accepting fragments, passing rhymes, anonymous voices as the traffic of meaning, at once ecstatic and humdrum. Hoi poloi starlings, birds then common in swarms in British town and country, not swallows with their powers of worldwide travel, provide the book's moment of ecstasy, seen through the tired eyes of Miss La Trobe who fears, like Woolf, that her work has failed:

> 'A failure' she groaned, and stooped to put away the records.
>
> Then suddenly the starlings attacked the tree behind which she had hidden. In one flock they pelted it like so many winged stones. The whole tree hummed with the whiz they made, as if each bird plucked a wire. A whiz, a buzz rose from the bird-buzzing, bird-vibrant, bird-blackened tree. (*BTA*, p. 209)

The words of aggression (attacked, pelted, stones, discordant, devouring) are transformed. Life and death, harmony and cacophony, are inseparable, but not resolved:

> The tree became a rhapsody, a quivering cacophony, a whiz and vibrant rapture, branches, leaves, birds syllabling discordant life, life, life, without measure, without stop devouring the tree. (*BTA*, p. 209)

Though Woolf accepts that the landmarks of England, and its written history, may vanish, she never quite lets hold in this last book and her wartime diaries of the community's powers of endurance: ordinary, irritating, muddle-headed, tenacious, and sprung on speech rhythms through centuries of language zigzagging across class and place; and – sometimes – held in common.

Notes

1. Dominick Argento's song-cycle, *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf, for Medium Voice and Piano* movingly captures moments and moods from the Diaries and knits them into an intense drift of life and of thematic reference: The Diary

April 1919, Anxiety Oct 1920, Fancy Feb 1927, Hardy's Funeral Jan 1928, Rome May 1935, War June 1940, Parents Dec 1940, Last Entry March 1941. The song 'War' ends with the words (marked 'freddamente'): 'I can't conceive that there will be a twenty seventh June, 1941.' The invocation of 'Parents': 'How beautiful they were' alludes to Schumann at the start, then its waltz-rhythm is interrupted by the anxiety of the war. The songs were recorded in 1988 and issued by Centaur Records Inc., 1992 (CRC 2092 DDD).
2. Stuart N. Clarke gave a paper on "Virginia Woolf in the Age of Aerial Bombardment" at the same conference where I first presented this work, June 2004.
3. Gill Plain in *Women's Fiction of the Second World War: Gender, Power and Resistance* discusses Woolf and Elizabeth Bowen, though not Sylvia Townsend Warner.
4. Leonard Woolf continued to publish on these issues into the 1940s: see for example his participation in Norman Angell and Others, *The Intelligent Man's Way to Prevent War* and C. R. Atlee and Others, *Labour's Aims in Peace and War).* See also his *Barbarians Within and Without*), *War for Peace*.
5. Leonard Woolf, *International Government, two reports by L. S. Woolf prepared for the Fabian Research Department; together with a project, by a Fabian Committee, for a supernational authority that will prevent war*.
6. The cover shows grenadier guards with gun carriage, and cavalry men, advancing on a Muslim flag (crescent moon) while one lone black turbaned figure hides beside a rock out of which protrude two barrels of heavy guns.
7. Virginia Woolf's works were, in fact, banned by the Nazis in 1942.
8. I have written at large about *Between the Acts* in the Introduction to the World's Classics Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), and in 'The Island and the Aeroplane: the case of Virginia Woolf', both essays collected in my *Virginia Woolf: the Common Ground*. I want therefore to give more space here to what she records in her *Diaries* while she was writing the work.
9. "'Anon' and 'The Reader': Virginia Woolf's Last Essays", ed. Brenda Silver *Twentieth Century Literature,* 25: 356–435.

2
Virginia Woolf, 'Patriotism', and 'our prostituted fact-purveyors'

Judith Allen

> Is it not possible that if we knew the truth about war, the glory of war would be scotched and crushed where it lies curled up in the rotten cabbage leaves of our prostituted fact-purveyors.
>
> (Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas*, 1938)

> Patriotism and its results – wars – give an enormous revenue to the newspaper trade, and profits to many other trades.
>
> (Leo Tolstoy, "Patriotism and Government", 1900)

> The narrowest patriotism could be made to appear noble, the foulest accusations could be represented as an indignant outburst of humanitarianism, and the meanest and most vindictive aims falsely disguised as idealism. Everything was legitimate which could make the soldiers go on fighting.
>
> (Arthur Ponsonby, *Falsehood in Wartime*: *Propaganda Lies of the First World War*, 1928)

In her 1916 letter to Margaret Davies, Virginia Woolf expressed her feelings regarding World War I: 'I become steadily more feminist, owing to the *Times*, which I read at breakfast and wonder how this preposterous masculine fiction [the war] keeps going a day longer [. . .] Do you see any sense in it?' (*L*2, p. 76). Woolf's question has been with us for the last four years, as we struggle, in this age of 'information', with our expanded media: newspapers, magazines, television, radio and Internet 'blog' sites. How did the United States – with major support from Great

Britain – undertake this unfathomable pre-emptive war in Iraq? And if Woolf became 'steadily more feminist, owing to the *Times*', how have we been transformed by our news media's coverage of the Iraq war? As we re-read Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas* in 2006, permeated as it is by repeated references to 'patriotism', 'prostituted fact-purveyors', and 'photographs of dead bodies and ruined houses', we are deeply saddened by the familiarity of it all – and outraged that this text is so very relevant to the state of our world today.

Investigating these uncanny connections, we are drawn to familiar words – 'patriotism', 'influence', 'opinion', and 'free' – words that Woolf's narrator explicitly foregrounds as 'words'; by placing these words in varying contexts they are simply deprived of any definitive meaning. Described as 'used words', the narrator confirms that words like 'free', have come to 'mean so little' (*TG*, p. 183). It is interesting to note how a similar narrative strategy functions in *A Room of One's Own* concerning the repetition of the word 'opinion'.Here, Woolf's narrator resists defining this most provisional term and suggests: 'One can only show how one came to hold whatever opinion one does hold' (*AROO*, p. 4). Recognising that 'what is amusing now [. . .] had to be taken in desperate earnest once' (*AROO*, p. 55), the narrator acknowledges that our own perspectives, and the world's, always undergo change; they become 'opinions' which are transitory and contingent, but are, nevertheless, inscribed *as* history. In *Three Guineas*, Woolf's narrator clearly undermines any distinction between the provisional 'opinion' and the clearly defined 'fact', for they have both been 'adulterated' (*TG*, p. 174) and are equally suspect. Together, in this particular context, many of these repetitive words – like the word 'influence' – will serve to interrogate and complicate one another as they contribute, in very different ways, to the effectiveness of the war effort. Propaganda, with its manipulation of language, its intentional distortion of 'facts', and its shaping of public opinion, ultimately ends with the well-known phrase coined by Walter Lippmann in his 1922 work, *Public Opinion*: 'the manufacturing of consent' (Lippman, 1922, p. 158). Woolf, in her narrative strategies, utilises the repetition of these significant words in order to manipulate language with a significantly different goal – that of 'manufacturing' a kind of critical thinking that will serve to undermine 'our prostituted fact-purveyors'.With the knowledge that some of our best newspapers and other media outlets have become 'our prostituted fact-purveyors', (*TG*, p. 176) and our governments have become propaganda machines 'manufacturing consent', how can democracy function? And why, in 2006, do we still find those in power constantly repeating that dissent

is 'unpatriotic', while those leaders of the opposition seem to cower in silence. There are, of course, informed people – critical thinkers – who continue to write exceptional letters of protest to their newspapers; these critical voices, the voices Woolf consistently calls forth, stand as the seeds of resistance, for they alone – in 2002 – refused to accept the government's spurious claim regarding 'weapons of mass destruction'.

This phrase was so frequently used by the government – and repeated so often by our newspapers – that the American Dialect Society chose 'weapons of mass destruction' (WMD) as the 2002 word (or phrase) of the year; the more significant term, 'patriotism' – given its own ubiquity in the media – was surely running a close second, and was clearly a subject to be found in many of Woolf's writings. In addition to *Three Guineas*, this would include her novels, diary entries, letters and many essays, such as "Thoughts on Peace in an Air Raid". Woolf was quite sceptical about the newspapers of her day, and expressed strong feelings about the Northcliffe Press in both her diaries and letters. These newspapers were controlled by the politically conservative Alfred Charles Harmsworth, a figure not unlike today's Rupert Murdoch, with his equally conservative media empire. Examining these two media strongholds, we can certainly see the linkage between Woolf's astute and sometimes scathing commentary on the newspapers of her day and our own sceptical assessments of today's print and visual media. These connections also highlight the current problems of corporate media ownership, including television stations and Internet companies, not present during Woolf's lifetime. Like Virginia Woolf's experiences during World War I, people on both sides of the Atlantic have been absolutely bombarded with varied forms of the word 'patriotism' – by both governments and newspapers. It has become the word most often used to rationalise the massive use of violence, and, simultaneously, the word used to stifle all kinds of dissent. In 2006, this propaganda effort, which began during World War I, continues.

In studying Woolf's writings, we unfortunately recognise that our governments' strategic use of the words 'nation',[1] 'patriotism', 'freedom', and 'democracy', amongst others, have, to use a Woolfian phrase, 'pargetted' the information we are entitled to in our so-called 'democracies', and fabricated new information – 'disinformation' – in order to fulfil their political agendas. To assess how this was both expressed and enacted during Woolf's lifetime I will refer to several significant works from that period. They include: Leo Tolstoy's "Patriotism and Christianity" (1894) and "Patriotism and Government" (1900), Walter Lippmann's *Public Opinion* (1922), Edward Bernays' *Propaganda* (1928), and Arthur Ponsonby's *Falsehood in Wartime*: *Propaganda Lies Of the*

First World War (1928). Of these, Lippmann's and Ponsonby's works were part of Leonard and Virginia Woolf's library. Although all were published between 1894 and 1928, their prescience regarding the problematic relationship between propaganda and democracy makes them indispensable. Arthur Ponsonby, in 1928, clearly predicted our present media problems: 'In future wars we have now to look forward to a new and far more efficient instrument of propaganda – the Government control of broadcasting. Whereas [. . .] in the past we have used the word "broadcast" symbolically as meaning the efforts of the Press and individual reporters, in future we must use the word literally, since falsehood can now be circulated universally, scientifically, and authoritatively' (Ponsonby, 1928, p. 27).

My discussion begins with an example from an American newspaper since our current media problems seem to resonate so clearly with what Woolf began to call 'these damned newspapers' (*L2*, p. 90). On 26 May 2004, the *New York Times* published a quasi-apology due to the shoddy journalism of several of its reporters; the articles in question had to do with the newspaper's coverage of the lead-up to the war in Iraq. Although the apology/explanation didn't go far enough – and was buried on page A10 – it did generate some good critical discussions in other magazines and journals, such as *The Nation* and *The New York Review of Books*; these articles served to precipitate an in-depth investigation into the complete failure of the press during the lead-up to the war in Iraq. One could easily conclude from the information revealed that the *New York Times*, the so-called 'newspaper of record' in the United States and around the world, was actually complicit with the United States government in supporting the decision to go to war. A terrible silence seemed to prevail at many major newspapers – almost a fear of speaking out. Was there a need, some other journals asked – post 9/11 – to maintain a certain 'patriotism', or were these newspapers (including the *Washington Post*) simply going for the 'scoop', getting any story – without solid evidence – before a competitor did? Or were they censoring stories because of government intervention? What became and remains the more significant story – during Woolf's time and the present – is the reporting about the reporting, and the increasingly complex relationship between government and the media.

In one major example of the failure of the *New York Times*, a senior reporter, Judith Miller, not named but referred to in the apology, wrote articles before the war quoting government sources (Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, Douglas Feith, as well as Ahmed Chalabi, head of the *Iraqi National Congress*) with whom she had long-standing personal

and professional relationships; many of these articles were about weapons of mass destruction.[2] During television and print interviews, Vice President Dick Cheney often referred to the information contained in the the *New York Times* articles written by Miller in order to buttress his case regarding the presence of these weapons. This set up a loop in which Cheney's minions got information onto the front page of the *New York Times*, and he gained credibility by essentially quoting himself and his colleagues – and disseminating false information to the world. With this unfortunate situation in mind, I would like to show how the newspapers in Woolf's time – especially leading up to the wars – were as unreliable and unscrupulous as those we now read on a daily basis.

Woolf clarified this point for us in *Three Guineas*:

> if you want to know any fact about politics you must read at least three different newspapers, compare at least three different versions of the same fact, and come in the end to your own conclusion. [. . .] In other words, you have to strip each statement of its money motive, of its power motive, of its advertisement motive, of its publicity motive, of its vanity motive, let alone all of the other motives, which, as an educated man's daughter, are familiar to you, before you make up your mind about which fact about politics to believe. (*TG*, pp. 173–5)

That most major newspapers and media outlets are now publicly-owned companies with corporate philosophies that look to increasing readership, advertising, and the financial bottom-line – as *Three Guineas* asserts – has transformed them, resulting in the frequent blurring of 'news' and 'entertainment'. Although 'journalistic' practices continue to evolve, along with cultural changes, they have always had their problematic aspects. This is clearly evident when one reads Leo Tolstoy's negative ideas regarding the newspapers of his day.

Woolf's commentary about the press in *Three Guineas* shares a great deal with Leo Tolstoy's ideas in his 1900 essay, "Patriotism and Government,"[3] and Tolstoy's comments on 'war', 'outsider' status, 'pacifism', and 'patriotism' resonate with many of Woolf's political and philosophical ideas. Of course, Woolf both read and wrote about Tolstoy's writings, later helping to translate several of his works for the Hogarth Press; and since *The Kingdom of God and Peace Essays* was published by Oxford University Press in 1936, and the Woolfs owned many of Tolstoy's texts, one can assume a certain familiarity with his ideas.

As my epigraph from "Patriotism and Government" suggests, Tolstoy, like Woolf, had serious concerns about the 'buying' of the press and how that related to the propagation of 'patriotism'. As Tolstoy states: 'Patriotism and its results – wars – give an enormous revenue to the newspaper trade, and profits to many other trades' (Tolstoy, 1968, p. 4). This assured that

> the ruling classes have in their hands the army, money, the schools, the churches, and the press. In the schools, they kindle patriotism in the children by means of histories describing their own people as the best of all peoples and always in the right. Among adults they kindle it by spectacles, jubilees, monuments and by a lying patriotic press. (Tolstoy, 1968, p. 4)

Woolf's narrator echoes some of Tolstoy in *Three Guineas* when she vows that women are 'to take no share in patriotic demonstrations; to make no part of any claque or audience that encourages war; to absent herself from military displays, tournaments, tattoos, prize-givings and all such ceremonies as encourage the desire to impose "our" civilization or "our" dominion upon other people' (*TG*, p. 198). Like Woolf, Tolstoy railed against any imposed silence, and found that 'governments fear expression of independent thought more than an army' and so they 'seize control of churches and schools' and find ways to 'establish censorship' and 'bribe newspapers' (Tolstoy, 1968, p. 532).

Woolf, a pacifist like Tolstoy, had her counterpart in Francis Meynell, a conscientious objector in WWI who anticipated Woolf's attack on militarist conditioning in *Three Guineas*: 'the martial music, the medals, the religious blessing of banners, the uniforms to catch the eye of the child, the picture of the soldier always as a saviour, not as a destroyer – it is by ruses and disguises such as these that the adult mind is rendered childish, and the horror and pain and frustration and crippling of war are made a schoolboy's holiday' (Meynell, 1934, p. 137). More recently, Chris Hedges, a war correspondent for the *New York Times*, in his 2003 book, *War is a Force that Gives us Meaning*, talks about 'patriotism' as 'often a thinly veiled form of collective self-worship, that celebrates our goodness, our ideals, our mercy and bemoans the perfidiousness of those who hate us' (Hedges, 2003, p. 10). Hedges sees war as an attempt to make the world understandable, a black and white tableau of 'us' and 'them'. In her writings on *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Hannah Arendt speaks of these simplistic divisions, 'for whoever is not included is excluded, whoever is not with me is against me, so the world loses all the nuance

and pluralistic aspects that [they assume] have become too confusing for the masses' (Arendt, 1979, pp. 380–1). Woolf, in her resistance to binary oppositions, and to labels that tend to 'constrict', sets out in *Three Guineas* to undermine and resist these clear-cut ways of thinking.

Utilisation of the word 'patriotic', in all of it guises, serves governments well, for it reiterates the 'us' and 'them' mentality, the necessary division of the 'patriotic' from the 'unpatriotic'. Re-reading *Three Guineas* in 2006, in the throes of our own three and a half year war in Iraq, we also read and listen to our present 'prostituted fact-purveyors', and their constant invocation of 'patriotism'. We also note the use of this word, with roots in *patria*, or fatherland, in the government's naming of the 'Patriot Act' in October of 2001. It is quite ironic to use the word 'Patriot' to name an act that deprives people of many constitutional rights by giving the executive branch of the government new powers of search and surveillance, and indefinite detention of citizens and non-citizens without formal charges; it is an act that impinges on free speech, due process and equal protection under the law.[4]

Woolf's sense of 'patriotism' and its connection to war is evident in some early letters and diary entries. In a 1915 diary entry, after attending a concert at Queen's Hall – where it was customary to open the concert with the National Anthem and follow it with a hymn 'O God our Strength' – Woolf wrote: 'I think patriotism is a base emotion. By this I mean that they played a national Anthem & a Hymn, & all I could feel was the entire absence of emotion in myself & everyone else' (*D*1, p. 5). Regarding the same concert, she wrote to Duncan Grant, 'What hellish luck – to miss you – and all for the sake of a Queen's Hall concert, where the patriotic sentiment was so revolting that I was nearly sick' (*L*2, p. 57). As Karen Levenback points out in *Virginia Woolf and the Great War*, 'What we see in her wartime writings [. . .] is a movement toward understanding that the sense of immunity for the effects of war – shared by much of the civilian population – was an illusion' (Levenback, 1999, p. 10). The war for both civilians and would-be combatants, had been fictionalised through 'the tyranny of the Northcliffe Press' (Levenback, 1999, p. 13) and mythologised in a history that was, in Woolf's words, 'all morality and battles' (*D*2, p. 115). Levenback also suggests that Woolf felt the government and the press were engaged in a conspiracy aimed at hoodwinking the unthinking or searching young, such as Rupert Brooke, and Cecil and Philip Woolf, into becoming players in the drama of war (13).

The 'damned newspapers' Woolf referred to, were – as noted above – owned and controlled by Lord Alfred Charles William Harmsworth, or

1st Viscount Northcliffe. Like Rupert Murdoch, who owns 275 newspapers and many television and radio stations on three continents, including the *New York Post* and *Fox News Corp*, Northcliffe held the largest media empire at that time, and utilised it to impart his conservative vision. Its effect on Woolf is expressed in her *Diary* in 1918: 'The Northcliffe papers do all they can to insist upon the indispensability & delight of war. They magnify our victories to make our mouths water for more; they shout with joy when the Germans sink the Irish mail; but they do also show some signs of apprehension that Wilson's terms may be accepted' (*D*1, p. 200). Phillip Knightley comments on this function of newspapers in *The First Casualty*: 'The willingness of newspaper proprietors to accept this control [government censorship] and their co-operation in disseminating propaganda brought them the rewards of social rank and political power. But it also undermined the public faith in the press' (Knightley, 1975, pp. 80–1).

More recently, questions of government censorship at the *New York Times* provoked a heated response in the Letters to the Public Editor column. On 16 December 2005, the paper revealed that the publication of a report on the Bush administration's 'warrantless surveillance of communications' had been 'delayed for a year'.The executive editor of the *New York Times*, Bill Keller, had met with senior administration officials about their concerns, and made the decision not to publish at that time. It was later revealed that the 'delay' was actually fourteen months, and that this new time-frame created the potential for influencing the 2004 Presidential election results. As one letter notes: 'Mr. Keller's job as executive editor of The Times is not to influence elections. It is not to decide what is "fair" to politicians (especially after including in his consideration of "fairness" consultation with the very administration accused of illegal activities)' (Calame, 2006, p. 10). Many readers expressed disappointment with the *New York Times*, and voiced concern that the editorial staff was perhaps 'embedded' with the government.

With Frank Rich, however, an OP-ED columnist for *New York Times*, we have a journalist who reveals what the public needs to know. Recently, he took his readers back a few years: 'In the run-up to the war [. . .] the administration did not even bother to commission an N.I.E., a summary of the latest findings from every American intelligence agency, on Iraq's weapons.' The answer, he reminds us, is found in:

> The most revealing war document leaked to date: the Downing Street memo of 23 July 2002, written eight months before the invasion.

> In that secret report to the Blair government, the head of British intelligence reported on a trip to Washington, where he learned that the Bush administration was fixing the 'intelligence and facts' around the predetermined policy of going to war with Iraq. If we were going to fix the intelligence anyway, there was no need for an N.I.E. (Rich, 2006, p. 10)

That this highly significant event received so little coverage in the American press after it was leaked in May 2005, and, more importantly, that the American public showed so little interest in it, indicates how effective the Bush administration's 'manufacture of consent' has been. As Rich asserts: 'This is the history we must remember now more than ever, because it keeps repeating itself, with ever more tragic results' (Rich, 2006, p. 10).

Interestingly, Rupert Murdoch's father, Keith Murdoch, was involved in fighting the pervasive censorship of the British press during the battle of Gallipoli. He turned over suppressed information regarding this disaster to the British government and tried to rectify the serious problem of war correspondents at the time – for they were the first victims of propaganda in WWI (Knightley, 1975, pp. 100–3). Although many informed individuals took a stand against World War I, and demanded a moral reason for the war, the government simply had none (Knightley, 1975, p. 81). The government had to create animosity against the Germans and their propaganda machine worked so well that twenty years later Joseph Goebbels based his propaganda on Britain's. Lord Northcliffe, proprietor of the *Times* and the *Daily Mail*, and 'the Director of Propaganda in Enemy Countries' was known to the Germans as 'the Minister of Lying', and from Woolf's statements, one assumes she agreed with them. As Knightley suggests: 'The war was made to appear as one of defense versus a menacing aggressor' (Knightley, 1975, p. 82). The *Daily Mail*, Northcliffe's paper, referred to the Kaiser in just one article as a 'lunatic', a 'barbarian', a 'madman', 'monster', and a 'criminal monarch' (Knightley, 1975, p. 82). Political leaders joined the propaganda campaign. Atrocities were fabricated. Northcliffe told his editors: 'The allies must never be tired of insisting that they are the victims of a deliberate aggression' (Knightley, 1975, p. 83). The *New York Times* took action to stop a rumour that it was partially controlled by the *Times of London* and that Lord Northcliffe was dictating *New York Times* policy to make it friendly to Britain and hostile to Germany (Knightley, 1975, p. 119). By 1919, Woolf wrote in her diary about the possibility of someone buying back the *Times of London*, 'to make it into a decent

paper again' (*D*1, p. 254). The 'lying patriotic press', in Tolstoy's words, continued to exploit the citizenry.

Given this activity, questions were raised about the accuracy of reporting and its connections to the functioning of democracy in Walter Lippmann's *Public Opinion*. As Ronald Steel asks in his Foreword to Lippmann's 1922 work: 'How could the public get the information it needed to make rational political judgments if it could not rely on the press?' (Lippmann, 1997, p. xi). *Public Opinion*, which seems to foreshadow some ideas in Woolf's "Craftsmanship" and *Three Guineas*, is, although extremely controversial in many ways, quite relevant to today's questions regarding the shaping of public opinion. Lippmann was interested in the psychological forces involved in forming opinions, and how these opinion could be shaped (Lippmann, 1997, p. xii). 'Troubled by what he had learned as a wartime propagandist, [Lippmann] had come to believe that distortion of information was inescapable' (Lippmann, 1997, p. xii). According to Steel, 'buried in Lippmann's measured, rational prose was a stunning rejection of traditional theories of democracy and the role played by the press' (Lippmann, 1997, p. xiv).

Lippmann, before becoming a famous journalist, met Leonard Woolf while traveling to a Fabian Society meeting in 1914. In *Beginning Again*, Leonard Woolf describes their train ride to this meeting; here they spoke at length about Freud's writings, Leonard having just read *The Interpretation of Dreams*, and reviewed *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (L. Woolf, 1963, pp. 167–8). Lippmann's familiarity with Freud's ideas is evident in his description of Freudians in *Public Opinion*: 'They have assumed that if internal derangements could be straightened out, there would be little or no confusion about what is the obviously normal relationship. But public opinion deals with indirect, unseen, and puzzling facts, and there is nothing obvious about them. The situations to which public opinions refer are known only as opinions' (Lippmann, 1997, p. 17).

Lippmann's scepticism, like Woolf's, relates to the problems inherent in language and the subsequent difficulties of communication. For Lippmann, 'words, like currency, are turned over and over again, to evoke one set of images to-day, another tomorrow'. In speaking of Lloyd George: 'A British Prime Minister, speaking in English to the whole attentive world, speaks his own meaning in his own words, to all kinds of people who will see *their* meaning in those words' (Lippmann, 1997, pp. 42–3; emphasis mine). Lippmann's comments regarding language are similar to those in Woolf's essay, "Craftsmanship". Here, 'words do not live in dictionaries; they live in the mind' (*DM*, p. 204) and 'they

mean one thing to one person, another thing to another person; they are unintelligible to one generation, plain as pikestaff to the next' (*DM*, p. 206). Lippmann finds that 'the ideas which we allow the words we read to evoke form the biggest part of the original data of our opinions. The world is vast, the situations that concern us are intricate, the messages are few, and the biggest part of opinion must be constructed in the imagination' (Lippmann, 1997, p. 44).

Ultimately, Lippmann finds that the complexities of our world should not be left to the public to interpret, and that one should have so-called 'experts' as intermediaries who would help people make their political decisions. For Lippmann, there were the 'insiders', specialists with the knowledge to act, and there were those without 'the time, nor attention, nor interest, nor the equipment for specific judgment'. These are the 'outsiders' (Lippmann, 1997, p. 51). And, according to Lippmann, 'every one of us is an outsider to all but a few aspects of modern life [. . .] It is on the men inside, working under conditions that are sound, that the daily administrations of society must rest' (Lippmann, 1997, p. 251). Perhaps Woolf's 'Outsider Society', with its ethic of resistance, stems from her response to this kind of thinking and acting. Clearly Woolf's writings both express and enact resistance to these 'men on the inside', 'the inner circle', those doing the 'deciding' – like George Bush's recent labelling of himself as 'the Decider' ('Bush: "I'm the Decider"'). Lippmann's call for this kind of coercion, with its concomitant erasure, was clearly undemocratic, and many were disturbed by his ideas.

Lippmann's philosophy at that time, which supposedly changed in later years, seems to be echoed by both the Bush and Blair administrations. When huge numbers of 'outsiders' voiced their opinions regarding the potential attack on Iraq in the many anti-war demonstrations around the world in 2003, President Bush referred to them as 'focus groups' ('Bush Unswayed'), clearly reflecting the 'marketing' of this war to the public; outsiders' 'focus groups', however, were totally ignored. What is certain is that the 'selling' of this war has been masterful; the propaganda effort, with its manipulation of language, blatant lies, constant linkage of Iraq to '9/11', and the necessary inculcation of 'fear', was brilliant. This is the 'mission' that the Bush administration 'accomplished'.

And yet, one is always shocked at how intensely the populace is drawn in by the sales pitch. The watchdog role of the press in a democracy seems diminished; and the search for 'news' that is not, as Woolf states in *Three Guineas*, 'prostituted' or 'adulterated', is quite time-consuming. It is difficult to 'read between the lines', to translate the subtext from

the distorted language used to 'propagate' this war. That the term, 'propaganda' comes from the word 'propagate' is no surprise.

Edward Bernays, a nephew of Sigmund Freud, originally published his treatise, *Propaganda*, in New York in 1928. Influenced by Freud and Walter Lippmann's earlier work on public opinion, Bernays felt that 'the conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country' (Bernays, 2005, p. 37). Bernays sounds very much like Lippmann here as he re-emphasises that 'we are governed, our minds molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of' (Bernays, 2005, p. 37). These are the 'invisible governors', and 'it is they who pull the wires which control the public mind' (Bernays, 2005, pp. 37–8). Many also see the Bush administration in this light, for its arrogance, its secrecy, and its absolute refusal to answer questions on issues that are clearly in the public domain; its ability to manipulate both the media and the population is impressive – even to those in the Democratic Party.

Bernays, according to Mark Crispin Miller's Introduction, 'casts himself as a supreme manipulator, *mastering* the responses of a pliable, receptive population' (Bernays, 2005, p. 20). And although the image of the detached propagandist was not Bernays idea, 'that cool and manly image was a commonplace from the Twenties through the Cold War, as was the obverse image of "the crowd" as *female* in its feverish responsiveness' (Bernays, 2005, p. 21). According to Miller, 'this tableau of domination' clearly resonates with 'the unmoved mover', and 'that spellbinder who excites the vulgar herd' (Bernays, 2005, p. 21). It certainly has links with the Dictator from *Three Guineas* who will 'dictate to other human beings how they shall live; what they shall do' (*TG*, p. 96), as well as the demonising and exclusion of women portrayed in that work. One also finds connections with the so-called smooth and 'civilised' controlling of the 'wild' and 'barbaric' as found in *A Room of One's Own* and so many of Woolf's writings. Woolf seems to have an understanding of Bernays' methods.

Miller asserts in his Introduction to *Propaganda*:

> Although the practice had, albeit unnamed, been variously used by governments for centuries [. . .] it was not until 1915 that governments systematically deployed the entire range of modern media to rouse their populations to fanatical assent. Here was an extraordinary

> state accomplishment: mass enthusiasm at the prospect of a global brawl that otherwise would mystify those very masses, and that shattered most of those who actually took part in it. The Anglo-American drive to demonize 'the Hun', and to cast the war as a transcendent clash between Atlantic 'civilization' and Prussian 'barbarism', made so powerful an impression on so many that the worlds of government and business were forever changed. (Bernays, 2005, pp. 11–12)

Part of the Woolfs' library, Arthur Ponsonby's 1928 *Falsehood in Wartime*: *Propaganda Lies Of the First World War*, begins with the recognition that 'falsehood is a recognized and extremely useful weapon in warfare, and every country uses it quite deliberately to deceive its own people, to attract neutrals, and to mislead the enemy' (Ponsonby, 1991, p. 13). But what Ponsonby, a Member of Parliament and a pacifist, finds most troubling, is 'the amazing readiness to believe. It is, indeed, because of human credulity that lies flourish' (Ponsonby, 1991, p. 13). Interestingly, Ponsonby finds the need for the weapon of falsehood 'more necessary in a country where military conscription is not the law of the land than in countries where the manhood of the nation is automatically drafted into the Army, Navy, or Air Service. The public can be worked up emotionally by sham ideals' (Ponsonby, 1991, p. 14). Here Ponsonby describes all the necessary actions: 'Facts must be distorted, relevant circumstances concealed, and a picture presented which by its crude colouring will persuade the ignorant people that their Government is blameless, their cause is righteous, and that the indisputable wickedness of the enemy has been proved beyond question' (Ponsonby, 1991, p. 15). Of course, this could be a description of what is happening today in the United States or Britain. Ponsonby, unlike Bernays, catalogues many of the major falsehoods propagated by the Allied governments.[5] As a pacifist, Ponsonby tried to reveal that 'war is fought in this fog of falsehood, a great deal of it undiscovered and accepted as truth [. . .] Any attempt to doubt or deny even the most fantastic story has to be condemned at once as unpatriotic, if not traitorous' (Ponsonby, 1991, p. 16).

Perhaps avoidance of this 'fog of falsehood' is similar to the firm espousal by both Woolf and Tolstoy that one must refuse to allow oneself to be 'hypnotised'. In Tolstoy's "Patriotism and Government", he calls for 'shaking off the hypnotism of patriotism' (Tolstoy, 2004, p. 13). Woolf shares Tolstoy's resistance to 'the power of medals, symbols, orders and even, it would seem, of decorated ink-pots to hypnotize the human mind [for] it must be our aim not to submit ourselves to such

hypnotism' (*TG*, pp. 207–8). The American flag, along with the flag lapel pins worn by so many men, fall into this category.

In *Three Guineas*, Woolf, in response to this propagandising effort, envisions a woman-run newspaper that would be 'committed to a conspiracy, not of silence, but of speech' (*TG*, p. 124). Woolf implements this idea in "Thoughts on Peace in an Air Raid" as her narrator speaks of 'a woman in *The Times* this morning – a woman's voice saying, "Women have not a word to say in politics"'(*DM*, p. 244). Later in that essay, this woman is identified as Lady Astor who refers to "'women of ability' and how they 'are held down because of a subconscious Hitlerism in the hearts of men'" (*DM*, p. 245). Women and others excluded from what is considered to be a nation – have no cause to be patriotic – 'no wish to be "English" on the same terms as you yourself are "English"' (*TG*, p. 183). Woolf's narrator calls for a different kind of connection to one's country, for this is definitely not her 'civilisation' (*D*4, p. 298). And as Woolf reiterates in a diary entry in 1940: 'I don't like any of the feelings war breeds: patriotism [. . .] all sentimental & emotional parodies of our real feelings' (*D*5, p. 302).

While Woolf denigrated both 'patriotism' and 'nationalism', she seems to have aligned herself with a certain 'cosmopolitanism'; however, she would also agree that all of these terms are constantly in flux and undergoing revision. We are reminded of her narrator in "Craftsmanship" explaining that words cannot be 'pinned down to one meaning' (*DM*, p. 206). And we learn from Homi Bhabha, in *Nation and Narration*, and from recent works that refuse to define 'cosmopolitanism',[6] that terms such as these have multiple meanings, each expressing and enacting complicated histories and varied trajectories. This is evident as we consider Woolf's oft-quoted statement from *Three Guineas*: 'as a woman I have no country; as a woman I want no country; as a woman, my country is the whole world' (*TG*, p. 197).

This statement has been used in varying forms, and in differing contexts, by Diogenes, Socrates, Thomas Paine, Oliver Goldsmith, Henry David Thoreau, and William Lloyd Garrison, amongst others; William Lloyd Garrison, an American Abolitionist, used a variation of this quotation as the motto of his 'Non-Resistance Society'. Garrison's son, also William Lloyd, found similarities between Tolstoy's anti-war works and his father's ideas of 1838; he then sent Tolstoy the 'Declaration of Sentiments' from William Lloyd Garrison's meeting to create the 'New England Non-Resistance Society'. This document contained their motto: 'Our country is the world, our countrymen are all mankind' (Garrison, 1838, p. 154). Given Tolstoy's stance against war and weaponry, and his

philosophy of 'non-resistance', which attracted Gandhi, he included Garrison's motto in his 1894 work, *The Kingdom of God is Within You*. Both Tolstoy's 'non-resistance' and Woolf's philosophy of 'indifference' share a call for 'resistance', a call 'not to fight with arms', a call to resist 'slavery' in all it guises (*TG*, pp. 193–5). For Tolstoy, the action is 'to turn the other cheek', and for Woolf, the move is be 'outside', to a place of complete 'indifference'. Both would 'take no share in patriotic demonstrations' (*TG*, p. 198) and agree that 'to be passive is to be active' (*TG*, p. 216). This stance involves 'the power of outsiders to abolish or modify other institutions of which they disapprove, whether public dinners, public speeches, Lord Mayors' banquets and other obsolete ceremonies [which] are pervious to indifference and will yield to its pressure' (*TG*, p. 216).

Woolf's narrator, when speaking of being 'outside', of having 'no country', was identifying herself as 'cosmopolitan'; and as Alex Zwerdling suggests, 'Woolf's cultural loyalties were European rather than British' (Zwerdling, 1986, p. 277). This, however, is a narrowly defined 'cosmopolitanism', as indicated by the provocative responses to Martha Nussbaum's "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism". Collected in *For Love of Country*?, along with sixteen responses representing extremely varied philosophical views, this work exemplifies the problematic nature of language that Woolf so often explores.

Nussbaum explores the Stoics and their ideas for 'a citizen of the world'; for them, 'one does not need to give up local identifications, but to think of oneself as surrounded by a series of concentric circles [. . .] and work to make all human beings part of our community of dialogue and concern' (Nussbaum, 1996, p. 9). Many of the respondents describe their own specific 'patriotism', defining it for themselves as Woolf's narrator does in *Three Guineas* (*TG*, pp. 197–8). Perhaps this expresses what Woolf is doing as she writes to Ethel Smyth following the publication of *Three Guineas*, in order to discuss young men and war, and to define her 'patriotism': 'Patriotism. My dear E . . . of course I'm "patriotic": that is English, the language, farms, dogs, people: only we must enlarge the imaginative, and take stock of the emotion. And I'm sure I can; because I'm an outsider partly; and can get outside the vested interest better than Leonard even – tho' a Jew' (*L6*, p. 235).

Resisting 'patriotism', Woolf's narrator in her 1940 essay, "Thoughts on Peace in An Air Raid", calls for 'thinking against the current' (*DM*, p. 244), against the loudspeakers, the government, and the newspapers that may be the voices of that government. This 'official story' must be resisted, and Woolf, in so many of her writings, both expresses and enacts this resistance.

Always interested in multiple voices, in hybridity, in the kind of language, as mentioned in "Craftsmanship", where 'Royal words mate with commoners; English words marry French words, German words, Indian words, Negro words' (*DM*, p. 205), Woolf clearly resists simplistic dichotomies of good and evil, and likes the meaning of the French-derived word, 'nuance' – as President Bush does not. Woolf wants to interrupt the 'unanimity' of the 'current' with questions, with dissent. She calls for speech instead of silence, with plans for 'finding new words' and 'creating new methods' (*TG*, p. 260). But she is intent on maintaining her 'outsider' status, which enables differing perspectives. And as different individuals view the 'photograph of dead bodies and ruined houses', so often concealed by governments and media, there is the shared acknowledgment that 'the picture is the picture of evil' and there is strong determination 'to do what we can to destroy that evil' (*TG*, p. 260). 'Patriotism', responsible for so much violence – labels, silences and isolates – and ultimately deprives people of freedom. As Woolf's narrator so poignantly points out in "Thoughts on Peace in an Air Raid": 'It is not true we are free' (*DM*, p. 245). Given the diminishing health of our 'so-called democracy', we may soon be echoing that line.

Notes

1. Ernest Renan's "What is a Nation?" was in Virginia Woolf's Library.
2. See John Macarthur, "The Lies We Bought", *Columbia Journalism Review*, May/June 2003, Franklin Foer's *New York Magazine*, "The Source of the Trouble", 7 June 2004, and Michael Massing's "Now They Tell Us", *The New York Review of Books* 51 (3) 3 February 2004.
3. Tolstoy's "Government and Patriotism" is collected in *Essays and Letters*, translated by Aylmer Maude. London: Oxford University Press, 1911. The page references refer to online version listed in the Bibliography.
4. The 'Patriot Act' was passed on 26 October 2001. Known officially as (Public Law 107–56), this is a very controversial piece of legislation. See the ACLU for details.
5. Arthur Ponsonby, Member of Parliament, wrote *Falsehood in Wartime*: *Propaganda Lies Of the First World War* in 1928. It was published in London by George Allen and Unwin. In 1980 and 1991, *The Institute for Historical Review*, thought to be a 'Holocaust denial' organisation, re-published this work.
6. See "Cosmopolitantinomies". *Cosmopolitanism*. Eds. Carol A. Breckinridge, Sheldon Pollock, Homi Bhabha and Dipesh Chakrabarty. Durham: Duke University Press, 2002.

3

Woolf's Political Aesthetic in "To Spain", *Three Guineas*, and *Between the Acts*[1]

Michael Payne

> [The writer] sits upon a tower raised above the rest of us. [. . .] It is a tower of the utmost importance; it decides his angle of vision; it affects his power of communication. All through the nineteenth century, down to August 1914, that tower was a steady tower. The writer was scarcely conscious either of his high station or of his limited vision. Many of them had sympathy, great sympathy, with other classes; they wished to help the working class to enjoy the advantages of the tower class; but they did not wish to destroy the tower, or to descend from it – rather to make it accessible to all. Nor had the model, human life, changed essentially since Trollope looked at it, since Hardy looked at it: and Henry James, in 1914, was still looking at it. [. . .] From that group let us pass to the next – to a group which began to write about 1925 and, it may be, came to an end as a group in 1939. [. . .] They are tower dwellers like their predecessors [. . .] But what a difference in the tower itself, in what they saw from the tower! When they looked at human life what did they see? Everywhere change; everywhere revolution.
>
> (*TM*, pp. 137–8)

When Virginia Woolf read these words from her essay "The Leaning Tower" to the Worker's Educational Association in Brighton in May 1940, she was not only marking a change that had taken place in modern writing and in how it depicted its subject – 'human life' – she was also identifying herself with a certain kind of political aesthetic.

Although she warns against writing in an aesthetic tower that leans to the left or to the right, which would have the effect of distorting the artist's angle of vision, she nevertheless declares in her essay "The Artist and Politics" (posthumously published along with "The Leaning Tower" in *The Moment*) that the artist is by no means independent of society; indeed, she writes, 'intellectually [. . .] he depends upon society' (*TM*, p. 227).

In this paper I hope to do three things: first, I would like to look back to Woolf's 1923 text "To Spain" in order to recover from it a sense (in her view) of the importance, for one's humanity, of reaching beyond one's own cultural and national identity, which is made possible there by a simple and quite ordinary act of the empathic (or fictional) imagination; second, I would like to add to that Susan Sontag's observation, in her recent book *Regarding the Pain of Others*, that Woolf in *Three Guineas* had an incisive understanding of how photographs of the Spanish Civil War made it possible to move beyond that earlier general empathy for humanity so as to regard the particular reality of someone else's pain; and finally, I would like to suggest that out of her progression from a generalised sense of empathy to that more particular identification, Woolf invented a performative language – a language that was intended to make things happen – before that performative possibility of language was formally described, ten years after her death, by the English philosopher J. L. Austin. Her brilliantly experimental last novel, *Between the Acts*, creates a powerful synthesis of her politics between the wars, her evolving aesthetics, and her determination to make her art politically performative. Along the way I will be departing only slightly from Sontag's reading in order to claim that at least as early as *Mrs. Dalloway*, which was published just two years after "To Spain" and thirteen years before *Three Guineas*, Woolf was already employing the political power of the empathic imagination in anticipation of the question that prompted her to write *Three Guineas*: 'How in your opinion are we to prevent war?' (*TG*, p. 7).

"To Spain"

Although it was written in 1923, and is something between an essay and a small piece of fiction, "To Spain" is remarkably prophetic of how Virginia Woolf was later, during the Spanish Civil War, to wrestle with the political currents of her time in the face of the twin threats of fascism and Nazism. In that text the implied reader is addressed as though she is a half-conscious traveller crossing the Channel and then a passenger in a train crossing France to Spain. As she watches the

houses drift by, she is accused by the narrator of not thinking about the ways these scenes of ordinary life are emblems of how civilisations rise and fall. She wants to take refuge in the Hardy novel she has brought with her and in her detailed recollections of the London streets she has left behind. She almost believes that her remembrance of such details of home – while she is abroad – is necessary to sustain them in their actuality while she is not there to gaze upon them. Nevertheless, having survived the Channel crossing, she stands trembling 'for one intoxicating moment upon the brink of the ideal society where everyone without fear or hesitation reveals the depths of his soul' (*TM*, p. 214). But this lucidity lasts for only a moment. Next, she becomes a disembodied spirit who flutters at the window of her train compartment, longing to lose herself in the 'new society' she sees passing so quickly by. How to sustain herself in the face of this otherness remains for her an unsolved dilemma. But after a 'methodical' crossing of France, she arrives at last in Spain. There our English traveller leaves her train compartment and enters the world (the house, the room) of a Spanish peasant woman. Don Fernando, who had a passion for pigeon pie, died last summer in Granada. Outside is the cry of an old man selling chickens, the braying of a donkey, and beyond the village, the African coast. Our traveller sees in the gaze of the Spanish woman a look as timelessly enduring as Spain itself. Our traveller has acknowledged the other, as best she can, in and for itself. Her achievement might be identified with what is sometimes called the mystical, visionary or ecstatic element of Woolf's imagination. But "To Spain" also helps us to understand another aspect of the later significance of the Spanish Civil War for her when her powers of empathy are extended to the act of regarding the pain of others.

Three Guineas and the photographs of the Spanish Civil War

The Spanish Civil War was made inescapable for Woolf in ways that were both personal and public. The personal story lies behind her assertion in *Three Guineas* that 'though many instincts are held more or less in common by both sexes, to fight has always been the man's habit, not the woman's' (*TG*, p. 13). This she observed at first hand in her nephew Julian Bell's abandonment of pacifism. In 1935 he introduced a volume of essays entitled *We Did Not Fight: 1914 – 18 Experiences of War Resisters* with the promise that his own generation will not be content simply to say no to war; it will also 'hit back as hard and shrewdly as possible, to bring down, by hook or by crook, any government and any governing

class that dares to make war' (J. Bell, 1935, p. xix). Within two years, however, he had abandoned the pacifism of his family, a decision that Woolf attributed to a generational divide that she could not understand. His decision to become a participant in the Spanish Civil War quickly led to his death at the age of 29. In a letter to E. M. Forster explaining his change of heart, Bell was careful to insist that his motivation was not just a determination to resist fascism. Instead, he acknowledges with stunning candour, that he finds in himself a 'barbaric lust for action of which war is the type. It is this that makes me feel [. . .] that the soldier is admirable' (J. Bell, 1938, p. 389). Wherever some version of the phrase that war is man's habit appears in *Three Guineas*, Bell's story is there too. Indeed, Quentin Bell was convinced that Woolf's book 'became in a large measure a kind of argument with Julian, or rather with what she supposed to be Julian's point of view' (Q. Bell, 1972, p. 203).

Woolf was also profoundly affected by the publication of war photographs from Spain. Although it was written more than a dozen years after "To Spain", *Three Guineas* develops through allusions to those photographs using the powers of empathy that are activated in that earlier text. A unique feature of *Three Guineas* is its use of two sets of photographs. One is a collection of five black-and-white archival photographs of a general, four heralds, a university procession, a judge, and an archbishop, each of these men wearing a costume (complete with wigs, medals, and embroidery) that represents the educated man in his public capacity. These photographs actually appear in the text. Helen Wussow has astutely pointed out that they 'extend and reverse [Julia Margaret] Cameron's penchant for portraying notable men and women in the clothes of greatness. Their subjects become travesties of power, their photographic images contradictions of significance' (Wussow, 1997, p. 51). This is, of course, a gallery of educated men whose habits make war happen.

The other collection of photographs is not reproduced; it is the record of the particular horrors of war. Woolf first describes them this way:

> Here then on the table before us are photographs. The Spanish Government sends them with patient pertinacity about twice a week. They are not pleasant photographs to look upon. They are photographs of dead bodies for the most part. This morning's collection contains the photograph of what might be a man's body, or a woman's; it is so mutilated that it might, on the other hand, be the body of a pig. But those certainly are dead children, and that undoubtedly is the section of a house. A bomb has torn open the side; there is

> still a birdcage hanging in what was presumably the sitting-room, but the rest of the house looks like nothing so much as a bunch of spillikins suspended in mid air. [. . .] War is an abomination; a barbarity; war must be stopped. For now at last we are looking at the same picture; we are seeing with you the same dead bodies, the same ruined houses. (*TG*, pp. 20–1)

Reading this passage today, it is clear why the American and British governments are doing all they can to suppress the publication of images of the casualties of war in Iraq. Each of such images – as Woolf knew so well – is an eloquent declaration against war.[2]

In her moving comments on *Three Guineas* in *Regarding the Pain of Others*, however, Sontag helps us imaginatively look at the photographs Woolf was physically looking at on the table when she was writing her book. In 1982 Sontag edited an important collection of essays by Roland Barthes that includes some of his most important ideas about photography. For example, he thought that photographs are no more transparent than words or any other signs; that they typically recall to us what is lost, dead and otherwise gone forever (thus their poignancy); and that they invariably say more than one thing about their subject. That is, there is typically not just a literal subject of a photograph (a studium, such as a bombed house) but also something else left over that pricks that subject (a punctum, such as the bird-cage) that distracts our attention from the main subject, makes us think about it in context, or makes us question whether there was more going on than the photographer wants us to see (Barthes, 1982, pp. 51–5.) Even the title of Sontag's book suggests a Barthesian context for thinking about photographs. The verb 'to regard' in French is often translated 'to gaze upon'. But to gaze is not just to see or to look; it is to look with engagement; it is to be fully present to the object of the gaze. Above all, it is not an indifferent or casual looking.

Woolf wants her readers imaginatively to see the specific horrors of war in the photographs that she describes but does not reproduce. The bird-cage especially would seem to be a metonymy of a domestic life that is now destroyed: a dead man or a woman, children's bodies, a shattered house, a presumably empty or silent bird-cage. Back in 1936–7 Woolf was certainly already an alert witness to the horrors of war. But while admiring Woolf's eloquent witness, Sontag nonetheless finds it, if not inadequate, at least partial or incomplete. She reminds us that we may now too easily fall into the trap of regarding the pain of others too abstractly or too generally. As terrible as Holocaust pictures still are, or

battlefield photographs from the American Civil War, we may regard them (perhaps, understandably, defensively) in the abstract. But, distressing as it is, we need to regard the pain of others individually, not in the abstract, if we are ever to put an end to war. Kant taught us that we are fully moral only in our relationship to others, in the affirmation of their unique difference from ourselves. He seemed to have in mind individual others, not, say (as groups) the Spanish, blacks, women, children, Jews, Muslims. Sontag writes near the end of her book, 'All memory is individual, unreproducible – it dies with each person. What is called collective memory is not a remembering but a stipulating; that *this* is important and this is the story about how it happened with the pictures that lock the story in our minds' (Sontag, 2003, p. 115). Regarding others' pain, Sontag thinks, is what we do – when we do it well – individually. Photographs help us do that. But they require of us that we not forget that their images come to us mediated and that they can sometimes mislead us into a general sense of suffering and pain, neglecting our most immediate individual link to others' excruciating uniqueness. Perhaps that is one reason why Woolf wisely did not reproduce the photographs of the war dead that she describes so powerfully.

Even though hers is a gentle criticism, Sontag implies that Woolf, too, was slipping away from regarding the unique, particular, individual pain that war causes. But, surely, that is not at all what is happening in the first description of the war photographs:

> This morning's collection contains the photograph of what might be a man's body, or a woman's; it is so mutilated that it might, on the other hand, be the body of a pig. But those certainly are dead children, and that undoubtedly is the section of a house. A bomb has torn open the side; there is still a birdcage hanging in what was presumably the sitting-room. (*TG*, pp. 20–1)

Although it is subsequently shortened into the phrase 'ruined houses and dead bodies', this image recurs like a visual refrain throughout *Three Guineas*, just as Septimus' suicide, though she did not witness it, is replayed in Mrs. Dalloway's imagination when she hears the account of it at her party. Her ability to regard his pain and to imagine the life of the woman in the house across from hers already suggests that Mrs. Dalloway has a particularised, empathic imagination that is potentially a counterforce to war.

Woolf's particularised, empathic imagination became a political force because of her facility for producing a performative language that not

only captures the empathic imagination of her readers but also keeps it focused on the situated moment of her characters, often in all their suffering and pain. When, in her manifesto for "Modern Fiction", she invites us 'to examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day', she concludes with this rhetorical question: 'Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration of complexity it may display, with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible?' (*CR*1, p. 150). To borrow J. L. Austin's term, hers is a performative language. Speaking on the BBC in 1956, Austin offered his manifesto for 'performative utterances': 'What we need besides the old doctrine about meanings is a new doctrine about all the possible forces of utterances' (Austin, 1979, p. 251). Perhaps he would have been pleased to have been reminded that Virginia Woolf had already made an art of such utterances, which enabled her to engage her reader not only in acts of general empathy but also in particular moments of regarding the pain of others. By the time she wrote her last novel, Woolf was able to use performative language to achieve an even more powerful synthesis of art and politics.

Between the Acts and *The Wind in the Willows*

Between the Acts was completed in the last year of Virginia Woolf's life, 1941, the year of her suicide, and was published posthumously. It is a book haunted by the possibility of the destruction of European civilisation (the action is set in 1939), by the threat of the invasion of England, and by the precipitous end of the kind of life and values that Woolf's Bloomsbury culture had promoted for nearly thirty-five years. Many years earlier, in 1908, Kenneth Grahame published *The Wind in the Willows*, which now would seem to be worlds away from Woolf's anguished wrestling with the question of whether she was living in the midst of great historical change or at the end of history altogether. But Grahame's book is an unnamed subtext throughout *Between the Acts*. Both her book and his record a persistent anxiety in English literature between the wars: that history may not be progressive after all, that time may sometimes run backwards, or that it might seem to stop altogether, perhaps made to do so by great events or by a great artist's creation of virtual time. Both art and history contribute to the disruptions of time in *Between the Acts* and in *The Wind in the Willows*.

Perhaps we all remember the climax of Mole's first venture into the Wild Wood in Grahame's novel, which includes his rescue by his friend Rat and his first encounter with Mr. Badger. After taking Mole and Rat

into his care and into his house, Badger leads them into the labyrinthine recesses of his underground world. Mole is staggered by the ramifications of it all, asking Mr. Badger, 'How on earth … did you ever find time and strength to do all this?' Badger's reply is a strange moment of dystopian fiction, one of the few in children's literature before World War II, in which he gives a history of what had been the civilisation of men and the reclamation by the order of nature once that civilisation fell (Grahame, 1969, p. 70). Here is a portion of that history:

> 'Very long ago, on the spot where the Wild Wood waves now, before ever it had planted itself and grown up to what it now is, there was a city – a city of people, you know. Here, where we are standing, they lived, and walked, and talked, and slept, and carried on their business. Here they stabled their horses and feasted, from here they rode out to fight or drove out to trade. They were a powerful people, and rich, and great builders. They built to last, for they thought their city would last forever.'
>
> 'But what has become of them all?' asked the Mole.
>
> 'Who can tell?' said the Badger. 'People come – they stay for a while, they flourish, they build – and they go. It is their way. But we remain.' (Grahame, 1969, p. 70)

Mole insists on more of an explanation than this, and Badger goes on with his account of the rise and fall of civilisations:

> It was all down, down, down, gradually – ruin and levelling and disappearance. Then it was all up, up, up, gradually, as seeds grew to saplings and saplings to forest trees, and bramble and fern came creeping in to help. Leaf-mould rose and obliterated, streams in their winter freshets brought sand and soil to slog and to cover, and in course of time our home was ready for us again, and we moved in. (Grahame, 1969, p. 71)

The reason, Badger insists, that the animals have remained is that together they have made a world. Indeed, he proclaims, 'It takes all sorts to make a world' (Grahame, 1969, p. 71).

Before I go back to bring us to the climax of Miss La Trobe's pageant of English history in *Between the Acts* more carefully, let me put just a few of Woolf's phrases beside Mr. Badger's insistence that 'We remain.' In her diary notes for this book, Woolf wanted to insist on a celebration of community in her own version of the ethic of Mr. Badger's 'It takes all

sorts to make a world.' There she wrote, "'I' rejected: 'We' substituted ... we all life, all art, all waifs & strays" (*D*5, p. 135). Indeed, the entire novel is her last effort to assert a communal phenomenology. But like so many last efforts to cling to the modernist ideals of unity, community and wholeness, this one, too, first wrestles with fragmentation. Thus, Mrs. Parker says to Giles: "'Surely, Mr. Oliver, we're more civilized?' '*We*'? said Giles. '*We*?'" (*BTA*, p. 111).

He then looks across at William, a homosexual. The narrator intrudes, 'He looked, once, at William. [. . .] It was a bit of luck – that he could despise him, not himself' (*BTA*, p. 111). There in an instant is Woolf's persistent ethical reflection that hatred and prejudice spring from what we now call abjection, or self-loathing. However impossible it is for Giles Oliver to embrace Mr. Badger's generous ethic – 'It takes all sorts to make a world' – the peasant chorus in Miss La Trobe's pageant persists in singing, through all the eras of English history, the ideal of civilised community that is slipping away even as they sing, 'Digging and delving [. . .] hedging and ditching, we pass. ... Summer and winter, autumn and spring return... All passes but we, all changes...but we remain forever the same' (*BTA*, p. 139). Perhaps Woolf counts on our recollection of Mr. Badger's history ironically to undercut this choric confidence in the permanence of civilisation.

As its title suggests, *Between the Acts* is an intercalated text, by which I mean that it has a structure on almost every level – from the sentence to the encompassing narrative – that emphasises what is in between: between the wars, in the midst of time, the intrusion of reflective consciousness into a given situation, and the aesthetic object opening itself up for participative response by the audience of the pageant of history. Like its great predecessor, *The Book of Revelation*, sometimes called *The Apocalypse*, *Between the Acts* has (like *To the Lighthouse*) the intercalated shape of a menorah. In *The Book of Revelation* there is an early anticipation of what lies in between the Alpha and the Omega: 'And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man' (2:13). In *Between the Acts* the domestic story of Giles and Ida Oliver, their friends, family, and house (Pointz Hall) frames Miss La Trobe's performance of a pageant of English history; but we are never allowed to forget the present context (1939) as an ultimate frame (as well as the grounded centre) for the performance. For example, in the snatches of conversation that come from members of the audience, we hear, 'And what about the Jews? The refugees ... the Jews ... People like ourselves, beginning life again ... But it's always been the same' (*BTA*, p. 121). Fragments such as these keep the text grounded in the present. Indeed, everything

that happens in the novel serves the purpose of framing the present moment, which, of course, is always the defining moment of history: we create our historical narratives by looking backward and forward from our grounding in the present. We are constantly between the acts.

There are many moments in the novel when the minute details of experience are intercalated and accentuated by syntax. This one is apropos of the uncertainty of the arrival of Giles' train from London, when suddenly we are in Candish's dining-room:

> Candish paused in the dining room to move a yellow rose. Yellow, white, carnation red – he placed them. He loved flowers, and arranging them, and placing the green sword or heart shaped leaf that came, fitly, between them. Queerly, he loved them, considering his gambling and drinking. The yellow rose went there. Now all was ready – silver and white, forks and napkins, and in the middle the splashed bowl of variegated roses. (*BTA*, pp. 35-6)

Here and throughout this novel the mimetic *now* and the historical *then* are constantly in play against each other. For example, the Olivers' marital story of a heartless stockbroker and his unfulfilled, poetic wife can be taken as the *now* of modern life within which – between the acts of which – we have the aesthetic performance of Miss La Trobe's *then*. But within that performance there are two pauses – between the acts – that allow the pageant to frame the *now* for the audience. 'Present time. Ourselves', their programme reads, just as we arrive at the modern age (*BTA*, p. 178). That pause is planned and is written into Miss La Trobe's text. But before that there is an unplanned pause or rent in the aesthetic momentum of the pageant. In the pre-Victorian section, where Woolf's text sounds most like Mr. Badger's narrative, the chorus chants,

> *Palaces tumble down* [. . .] *Babylon, Nineveh, Troy ... And Caesar's great house ... all fallen they lie ... Where the plover nests was the arch ... through which the Romans trod ... Digging and delving we break with the share of the plough the clod ... Where Clytemnestra watched for her Lord ... saw the beacons blaze on the hills ... we see only the clod ... Digging and delving we pass ... and the Queen and the Watch Tower fall ... for Agamemnon has ridden away ... Clytemnestra is nothing but ...* (*BTA*, pp. 139–40)

Then the wind picks up and the voices of the chorus die away, becoming inaudible. 'The illusion had failed', Miss La Trobe believes for an

instant; 'This is death', she murmurs (*BTA*, p. 140). But it is not, for in the silence as 'the illusion petered out' nature fills in, and 'the cows take up the burden' (*BTA*, p. 140). They fill the silence with their bellowing, as though a primeval voice is 'sounding loud in the ear of the present moment' (*BTA*, p. 140). Meanwhile, the audience, returning to their programmes, conclude that this is their Shakespearean moment, when they are being relied upon to fill out the performers' imperfections with their thoughts.

In these two pauses gaps, or rents – one intentional the other not – the reality of the historical has been allowed to intrude upon the present and to break into the aesthetic. Here, before Foucault and without the aid of Nietzsche, Woolf has captured poignantly a key feature of the historical imagination. In "Nietzsche, Genealogy, and History", Foucault recovers what he takes to be Nietzsche's most important historical insight: Origins and definitive outcomes are the phantoms of historiography. Historical time is always genealogical, a time in between. This insight leads Foucault to celebrate what he calls 'the new historian' in language that is very close to Miss La Trobe's: 'The new historian, the genealogist will know what to make of this masquerade. He will not be too serious to enjoy it; on the contrary, he will push the masquerade to its limit and prepare the great carnival of time where masks are constantly reappearing' (Foucault, 1977, pp. 160–1). No one, I think, knows for sure if or how the weight of this new sense of history contributed to Virginia Woolf's suicide. Although it is tempting to think of her as one of the last great modernists, struggling to hold together in her art the constantly fragmenting pieces of contemporary culture, her most powerful depiction of suicide is not like that at all. Septimus Warren Smith in *Mrs. Dalloway* throws himself out the window apparently in a desperate effort to become one with the world.

Between the Acts ends with Mrs. Swithin's reading another portion of Wells' *Outline of History* and the Olivers' preparing for yet another episode in their unending domestic conflict. The novel's last words are: 'Then the curtain rose. They spoke' (*BTA*, p. 219), which leaves the lingering uncertainty that this final scene now may be the book's ironically melodramatic frame-fiction and that Miss La Trobe's pageant, with its two framed pauses, may be as close to the real as we can get.

Alex Zwerdling's *Virginia Woolf and the Real World*, which begins with a refutation of Quentin Bell's image of his aunt, who, like the Lady of Shalott, isolated herself from the affairs of the real world in her tower of art. Bell wrote, mistakenly, I think, that 'Her gift was for the pursuit of shadows, for the ghostly whispers of the mind and for Pythian

incomprehensibility' (Q. Bell, 1972, p. 186). He is too tactful to say so explicitly, but one implication of his Tennysonian image of his aunt is that it was only when she left her tower of aesthetic isolation for the real world that she became vulnerable to death, committing suicide and floating down to Camelot. Neither Bell nor Zwerdling quotes from the stanza that ends Part III of Tennyson's poem, which goes like this:

> She left the web, she left the loom,
> She made three paces thro' the room,
> She saw the water-lily bloom,
>   She saw the helmet and the plume,
> She look'd down to Camelot.
> Out flew the web and floated wide;
> The mirror crack'd from side to side;
> 'The curse is come upon me,' cried
>   The Lady of Shalott.
>   (Tennyson, 1953, p. 28)

In 1940, the year before she finished *Between the Acts* and then took her own life, Woolf wrote "The Leaning Tower", one of her finest critical essays. It begins this way:

> A writer is a person who sits at a desk and keeps his eye fixed, as intently as he can, upon a certain object – that figure of speech may help to keep us steady on our path if we look at it for a moment. He is an artist who sits with a sheet of paper in front of him trying to copy what he sees. What is this object – his model? [. . .] Two words alone cover all that a writer looks at – they are, human life. (*TM*, p. 128)

When she develops her image of the leaning tower, Woolf cautions us to be suspicious of writers who want to lean their towers to the right or (as the writers of the 1930s had done) to the left. Perhaps her tower is indeed an image of artistic perspective, as Bell thought; but Woolf's question is how the writer might best engage human life all around the tower, leaning neither to right nor to left. When she spoke these words, she was after all outside the tower, among the workers of Brighton. Indeed, how to engage the real world and to render it artfully, was perhaps her greatest passion and drive. She put frames around what she wanted to accentuate, not what she wanted to defend herself or her readers against: the 'Time Passes' section of *To the Lighthouse*, the imaginative reliving of the death of Septimus Warren Smith in *Mrs. Dalloway*,

her allusions to the photographs of the dead in the Spanish Civil War in *Three Guineas*, and the impending threat of the German Nazi attack on England in *Between the Acts*.

Between the Acts does encompass a nightmarish vision, but it is not that of leaving the tower of art for the real world, whether or not that was what killed Virginia Woolf or Tennyson's Lady of Shallott. The nightmare there in 1941 was that immediate events could unfold in Sussex that would surely return rhododendron forests and mastodons to Piccadilly; it is a nightmare of history moving backwards, a vision of the end of civilisation. That is what Mr. Badger made Mole and Rat consider as he led them into his ancient home. It haunted Freud, too, when he died a few years earlier in London. Surely it is a nightmare that is with us still.

Notes

1. Portions of this paper were delivered at the University of Pittsburgh (2004), at The Space Between conference at Bucknell University (2006), and at the Virginia Woolf in Bloomsbury conference in 2004. Thanks especially for those occasions to Jessica Rae Butto, Roger Rothman and Julie Vandivere.
2. There are excellent accounts of Woolf's deep interest in photography in such books as Pamela L. Caughie's *Virginia Woolf in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000) and detailed studies as well of how photographs of the dead in the Spanish Civil War came to her attention, in such books as Emily Dalgarno's *Virginia Woolf and the Visible World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

4

Who Let the Dogs Out? Samuel Johnson, Thomas Carlyle, Virginia Woolf and the Little Brown Dog

Jane Goldman

> Anyone who has done historical research knows that the undocumented often have more to say about how the world is put together than do the well pedigreed. What do contemporary companion species relations between humans and 'unregistered' dogs in technoculture tell us about both inheriting – or perhaps better, inhabiting – histories and also forging new possibilities? These are the dogs who need 'A Category of One's Own,' in honor of Virginia Woolf. [. . .] Woolf understood what happens when the impure stroll over the lawns of the properly registered [. . .] when these marked (and marking) beings get credentials and an income.
>
> (Donna Haraway, 2003, p. 88)

Woolf's 'small separate statue'[1]

What sort of company will the Woolf memorial keep among London's open-air statuary? How does this object square with Woolf's recorded disdain for public statues, in her London essay,[2] "This is the House of Commons" (1932): 'The days of the small separate statue are over' (*LS*, p. 70)? These words share a certain provenance with the bust itself. A replica of an existing bust, completed August 1931, by Stephen Tomlin, Woolf sat for it during the period she was writing her novel *Flush* and preparing her London essays for *Good Housekeeping* magazine. Woolf's pen therefore seems to demolish her own 'small separate statue' as she collaborates in its very creation. The reissue of the bust coincides,

eerily, with the reissue of Woolf's London essays.[3] A cast already stands in the garden of Monks House (where Woolf's ashes were scattered); another stands in the National Gallery. The original plaster cast is at Charleston, the Bloomsbury Group House preserved by the nation just as Thomas Carlyle's Chelsea house has been preserved, itself the focus of another of Woolf's London essays, "Great Men's Houses" (1932).

Woolf's earlier "Carlyle's House" (1909) finds the great sage's home 'forcibly preserved' (*CH*, p. 3). Both essays scrutinise his house contents, but whereas "Carlyle's House" attends to a 'horrid' photographic portrait of a moribund, emaciated Mrs Carlyle (*CH*, p. 4); "Great Men's Houses", conversely, picks out from the objects on display the cast of Mr Carlyle's 'excruciated and ravished face [. . .] when his life was done' (his face itself a cast of lived experiences) (*LS*, p. 41). That Woolf's own portrait, from life, was in process as she wrote these words gives them a distinct cast in turn. The new cast of Tomlin's bust, a repetition or representation of an earlier representation is a poignant link to the living Woolf: a signifier of a signifier of Woolf. Less reverentially, it casts up Dr Johnson's figure for a thought put into new words: 'the old dog in a new doublet'; or *recasts* Johnson: 'the old dog in the *old* doublet'. Recalling Jacob's analogy, in *Jacob's Room*, for the presence of women in church; the dog 'approaching a pillar with a purpose' (*JR*, p. 33), I fear the consequences of a dog's trespassing in Tavistock Square Gardens.[4] Yet it betters the fate of Woolf's phantom, dogged, Judith Shakespeare, who has no statue, no tombstone to piss on, 'buried at some cross-roads where the omnibuses now stop at the Elephant and Castle' (*AROO*, p. 113). But before marking out the canine territories between the tombless Judith Shakespeare and the cast of Woolf's bust and the death mask of Carlyle, it is worth exploring *A Room of One's Own* for Woolf's engagement with, and refiguring of, another of Johnson's rhetorical dogs.[5]

Dr Johnson and Mrs Woolf

> Sir, a woman's preaching is like a dog's walking on his hinder legs. It is not done well; but you are surprized to find it done at all. (Boswell, 1971, vol. 1, p. 463)

Well before her most famously (and for some, embarrassingly) canine novel, *Flush*: *A Biography*, Woolf's writing teems with signifying dogs, many of them the mutant literary descendants of patriarchy's most persistent misogynist canine figure. Johnson's notorious analogy for

women preachers (a dog dancing on hind-legs), I would argue, haunts Shakespeare's sister, Woolf's messianic – improperly registered – woman artist, in *A Room of One's Own*. The narrator is shocked to discover Johnson's 'very words used again in this year of grace, 1928, of women who try to write music' (*AROO*, p. 54). She cites Cecil Gray's transposition of 'Dr Johnson's dictum', which he renders as 'Sir, a woman's composing is like a dog's walking on his hind legs. It is not done well, but you are surprised to find it done at all' (Gray, 1924, p. 246). Johnson's dog seems to be a version of the Angel in the House that the woman writer must kill off, according to Woolf, before she can settle to write. Adapting an observation by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, she concludes: 'Women have not had a dog's chance of writing poetry' (*AROO*, p. 108). Woolf frequently re-inscribes this sliding canine signifier in representations of struggles between men and women over artistic subjectivity.

Johnson's dictum goes further than reinforcing the traditional hierarchy – man, woman, animal – by equating woman with dog (despite its maleness). With it, he silences not only Boswell but his account of the woman preacher too. Boswell does not report her sermon; we do not hear her voice. Such disdain for women preachers is linked to earlier centuries' religious intolerance of women's preaching, speaking or performing in public. Women were considered too corrupt to act as vessels for the sacred word of God, an attitude that transfers to the more secular realm of poetic voicing too. In *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf makes interesting use – or *misuse* – of Johnson's aphorism:

> The woman composer stands where the actress stood in the time of Shakespeare. Nick Greene, I thought, remembering the story I had made about Shakespeare's sister, said that a woman acting put him in mind of a dog dancing. Johnson repeated the phrase two hundred years later of women preaching. And here, I said, opening a book about music, we have the very words used again. (*AROO*, p. 54)

Here Woolf does a number of interesting things in her intervention in the evolution of Johnson's dog.

Most notably, she robs Johnson of his authority as source/speaking origin for the figure, even as she cites its – correctly attributed – citation by Cecil Gray in his 1928 *Survey of Contemporary Music*. Johnson's anecdote is made to appear an adaptation (so *in*accurately does history repeat itself!) of the fictional Nick Greene's comparison of a woman acting and a dog dancing, reprising 'the poodles dancing and women acting' in the narrator's story, a few pages earlier, concerning Judith Shakespeare's

aspirations for the stage ('no woman, he said, could possibly be an actress' (*AROO*, p. 48)), where his words seem to start a fatal chain of events. Greene's words are followed by his 'pity' for her, his impregnation of her, and her suicide – thereby causing the textual gaps in the canon, the loss of – the silencing of – the feminine poetic voice. There is a melancholy paradox here: Woolf may in effect be voicing the feminine by intruding her own fictional character as Johnson's source – but what is voiced concerns the silencing and death of a woman poet.

The 'loose-lipped' Nick Greene previously appears in Woolf's own work of 1928, her novel-biography, *Orlando*, another Woolf text teeming with dogs and canine tropes, but we might also gloss this passage with reference back to her first novel, *The Voyage Out* where Terence likens Rachel's virtuoso pianism to 'an unfortunate old dog going round on its hind legs in the rain' (*VO*, p. 276). Although the Johnsonian canine trope is here applied to Beethoven's music rather than to the musician herself, later in the chapter Terence imagines a more experienced Rachel as a 'drilled dog' (*VO*, p. 283). The very gender associations of Johnson's canine trope also encourage us to see Terence as contemptuous of Rachel's playing, not just of the music, and as subordinating Rachel's artistry to his own. Her musicianship is supposed to support and contribute to the process of his literary composition. He goes on to condemn her reading matter and advocate poetry to her – to read, not write, of course. This scene, exploring her fiancé's smothering of Rachel's creativity, anticipates the deathbed scene where he seems to speak with her dying breath. It also provides a Woolfian gloss on the references to women composers figured as dogs on hinder legs. Both scenes, then, provide further alternative Woolfian sources for Woolf's engagement with Johnson's canine trope in *A Room of One's Own*.

We can find in other texts by Woolf the woman-artist/poet figure dogged by parodies of the Johnsonian dog: for example, in *Flush* there's an important moment when Flush, the pet lapdog of the poet Elizabeth Barrett-Browning, 'dance[s] on his nude attenuated legs' (*F*, p. 143); and there's a dog in one of Rhoda's visions in *The Waves*, where 'A woman walks on deck, with a dog barking round her' (*TW*, p. 164). Lily Briscoe at her easel, 'wince[s] like a dog' (*TTL*, p. 84). Johnson himself often uses dog similes in discussing poetry and painting: 'To some lady who was praising Shenstone's poems very much', Boswell records, 'and who had an Italian greyhound lying by the fire, he said, "Shenstone holds amongst poets the same rank your dog holds amongst dogs; he has not the sagacity of the hound, the docility of the spaniel, nor the courage of the bull-dog, yet he is still a pretty fellow"' (qtd. in Hill, 1907, vol. 2, p. 6).

And he gives dogs the better of a human when 'talking with some persons about allegorical painting, he said, "I had rather see the portrait of a dog that I know, than all the allegorical paintings they can shew me in the world"' (Boswell, 1934, vol. 1, p. 208).

Woolf also subtly re-figures Johnson's dog in her writing. His dog 'walk[s] on his hinder legs' and Terence's dog similarly 'go[es] round on its hind legs' whereas Nick Greene's dog, in *A Room of One's Own*, is specified as a 'poodle' who, like Flush, *dances*. But these dancing dogs also have their ancestor in Johnson's wit. Significantly he uses the term 'dancing dogs' to express his contempt of actors:

> JOHNSON. 'Players, Sir! I look on them as no better than creatures set upon tables and joint-stools to make faces and produce laughter, like dancing dogs.' – 'But, Sir, you will allow that some players are better than others?'
> JOHNSON. 'Yes, Sir, as some dogs dance better than others.' (Boswell, 1934, vol. 2, p. 400)

This Johnsonian gloss on the stage-manager, Greene's 'dancing poodle' encourages us to read a caricature of Johnson concealed in the description in *A Room of One's Own* of Greene as 'a fat, loose-lipped man'.

I have also been examining Johnson's work for more dogs. 'Dog', it seems, is a floating signifier for Johnson, applicable to both women and men. He defines 'canine' in his *Dictionary* with reference to Joseph Addison's misogynist observation: 'A third kind of women are made up of canine particles: these are scolds, who imitate the animals out of which they were taken, always busy and barking, and snarl at every one that comes in their way' (Johnson, 1755, vol. 1).[6] But he also frequently uses 'dog' as an insult to men, defining it, less vehemently, as a 'reproachful name for a man' (Johnson, 1755, vol. 1). His work is peppered with talk of lap-dogs, performing dogs, dog-tricks, heroic dogs, not to mention the Black Dog, his preferred signifier for depression. Hester Piozzi reminds us that 'The definition in his Dictionary of dog, in its third sense, as a reproachful name for a man, does not cover all his uses of the word. The reproach is often mixed with good humour' (Piozzi, 1786, p. 275). I have been tracing his gendering of the term in relation to a sliding scale of Johnsonian abuse. The more insulting the use of dog, the more feminine the target seems to be the rule. I am interested in how Woolf picks up on this gendering. For instance, in *A Room of One's Own* she seems to figure patriarchal colonialism and inscription as a dog marking its territory (women, unlike men, 'will

pass a tombstone or a signpost without feeling an irresistible desire to cut their names on it, as Alf, Bert or Chas. must do in obedience to their instinct'), even as it aligns dogs with women as the objects of this process: 'Ce chien est á moi' is the appropriating murmur of the imperial colonising instinct to claim 'a piece of land or a man with curly black hair' (*AROO*, p. 50).[7]

There is here a racial cast to Woolf's canine signifier too, which may be read as not only referring to African people – something Woolf may also derive from Johnson. For example, there is a Johnsonian canine pedigree to the term 'rake', used by Terence, in the piano scene cited above, where he taunts Rachel about feminine qualities: 'Every woman not so much a rake at heart, as an optimist, because they don't think. What do you say, Rachel?' (*VO*, p. 275). Rachel's own name is close to the etymological sources supplied by Johnson where 'rake' is also derived from 'rekel, Dutch, a worthless cur dog' (Johnson, 1755, vol. 2). The warmer end of the spectrum of Johnson's canine epithets reserved for men, indeed, may derive from this canine reading of 'rake', which he defines as 'A loose, disorderly, vicious, wild, gay, thoughtless fellow; a man addicted to pleasure' (Johnson, 1755, vol. 2). Among Johnson's literary citations, however, under his definition of the adjective 'CU'RRISH' (as 'Having the qualities of a degenerate dog; brutal; sour; quarrelsome; malignant; churlish; uncivil; untractable; impracticable'), are lines from Shakespeare that racially mark the epithet: 'I would she were in heaven, so she could/ Entreat some pow'r to change this currish Jew'. And the third definition of 'DOG' likewise cites Shakespeare's reproachful 'dog jew' in the *Merchant of Venice*. On the other hand, elsewhere he cites 'the reproachful name of dog, commonly used by the Jews of the heathen' (Johnson, 1755, vol. 1). Again, Johnson shows how dog is a floating signifier in its racial aspects too. Terence's pointed etymological definition of Rachel as rake, in proximity to his Johnsonian canine analogy of her musical ability, does encourage us to retrieve 'rekel' and 'cur dog', from where the Johnsonian scent takes us to Shakespeare's 'currish Jew' and 'dog jew'. Marriage to Terence would mean Rachel's interpellation as his wife in these terms. Rachel is in any case a recognised Jewish name, and there are other theories about how Woolf arrived at this name.[8]

Unlike the dead Rachel Vinrace, the dead Judith Shakespeare is revived and resurrected by Woolf at the close of *A Room of One's Own* to act as a living and collective inspiration for the women who make up her audience ('She lives in you and me' (*AROO*, p. 113)). Elisabeth Bronfen has remarked on the efficacy of this revisionary manoeuvre, when she states that the

> birth of the poet [no longer means] the death of femininity [. . .] The birth of the originary, effaced woman poet here requires that feminine subjectivity has already attained a space within the symbolic order of culture. Given that Judith Shakespeare is from the start dead and imagined, Woolf's writing seeks to resurrect a potential feminine poetic gift into an actual poetic presence, to turn fiction into fact, indeed to invent a historical person after the event. (Bronfen, 1992, p. 149)

Bronfen does not comment on the function of Greene or the Johnsonian dog in the story of Shakespeare's sister. It is in the feminist economy of poetic resurrection she outlines, however, that Johnson's dog, I suggest, is vitally positioned.

To summarise: in the course of voicing these interrelated stories in *A Room of One's Own*, and in voicing – or insubordinately miming – Johnson's aphorism, Woolf appropriates, prefigures and refigures his canine figure, itself a figure of figuration as well as figure of the subordinated (and taboo) feminine voice, creating for it an alternative Woolfian origin. This figure of voicing contributes to the complex politics of voicing-the-feminine explored in *A Room of One's Own*, which is itself, of course, partly ventriloqised through the voice of 'Mary Beton' (who speaks the extracts I have quoted) in dialogue with 'Mary Seton' and 'Mary Carmichael'. Not surprisingly, *A Room of One's Own* has been called a radically destabilised text, and subversively feminist for this very reason. But I would argue that it is not so dialogical that it is without a discernible feminist agenda operating in its rhetorical 'content', to fall back on an old-fashioned term. Woolf's manipulation of rhetorical figures from various (patriarchal) sources raises issues that are often elided by approaches identifying the dialogical.

Before we look at an earlier and crucial example of Woolf's refiguring of Johnson's dog – one of significance in relation to other creatures inhabiting *A Room of One's Own* – I want briefly to respond to the first study to address Woolf's debt to Johnson. In *Virginia Woolf and Samuel Johnson*: *Common Readers* (1995), Beth Carole Rosenberg does considerable service to Woolf studies by showing that there is more to Woolf's engagement with Johnson's work than 'just Woolf's casual reference to the Common Reader'. Rosenberg argues that 'The Common Reader for Woolf becomes a rhetorical technique that, like dialogue, allows for flux, freedom and the lack of stable meaning'. Woolf, she claims, reads Johnson 'as a dialogical writer' and, like Johnson, becomes a dialogical writer herself. This is in reaction to Woolf's father, Leslie Stephen, who

enforces a monologic perspective on Johnson which has dominated Johnson studies ever since (Rosenberg, 1995, p. xvi; p. xxi).

Claiming both Woolf and Johnson as dialogical writers, Rosenberg shies away from close textual comparison and from detailed investigation of Woolf's actual allusions to Johnson. By no means a feminist reading of Woolf, Rosenberg's work nevertheless offers Johnson as a dialogical feminist source for Woolf (a welcome intervention in some feminist criticism that thinks back only through Woolf's mothers), pointing out that she draws from him strategies that help her 'develop her female literary history and [. . .] articulate the lack of female voices with which women writers need to interact' (Rosenberg, 1995, p. 119). She argues that the 'dialogical subjectivity' of *A Room of One's Own* owes much to Johnson's own dialogic technique, but does not consider the misogynist *content* of his texts, or Woolf's citations of Johnson in *A Room of One's Own*. Does his own dialogism undo Johnson's misogyny, then, even before Woolf turns on it? Or is Rosenberg silent on Johnson's dog because it undermines her argument – or perhaps because her method of dialogical reading cannot take account of specific rhetorical figures?

Making a fatuous comparison between 'a river in Macedon' and 'a river at Monmouth', Fluellen, in Shakespeare's *Henry V*, declares to Gower 'tis alike as my fingers is to my fingers, and there is salmons in both' (Shakespeare, *Henry V*, IV.7). Rosenberg's book perhaps takes us no further in analysis of Johnson and Woolf than 'dialogisms in both'. On the other hand, does my chosen approach to specific rhetorical tropes take us any further than 'dogs in both'? By plumping for 'dogs in both', I am hoping to offer more detailed exploration of specific rhetorical figures and tropes, paying attention to their refiguring and gendering in Woolf's work. What is at stake here, I suggest, is the relationship between 'feminist aesthetics' and Enlightenment and Humanist sources. If we examine Woolf's particular choice of figures ('and there is figures in all things', Fluellen tells us), we may find a return to and a refiguring of central humanist texts – rhetorical strategies that suggest the (feminist) *enlightening* of the Enlightenment. I welcome the recent historical turn in Woolf studies and the many projects to consider in detail Woolf's engagement with canonical literary sources from classical to nineteenth–century texts. With this in mind, I am suggesting that Woolf's refiguring of Johnson's dog complements, and might be understood in the context of, a larger evolutionary aesthetic project of Woolf's, which I am positing and exploring, to refigure for feminism that central text in Humanist (Augustan) aesthetics: Horace's *Ars Poetica*. I am thinking

in particular of the figure of the famous chimaera that Horace uses to introduce his thoughts on formal decorum in painting and poetry and his much quoted dictum on painting and poetry, 'ut pictura poesis':

> If a painter chose to join a human head to the neck of a horse, and to spread feathers of many a hue over limbs picked up now here now there, so that what at the top is a lovely woman ends below in a black and ugly fish, could you, my friends, if favoured with a private view, refrain from laughing? Believe me, dear Pisos, quite like such pictures would be a book, whose idle fancies shall be shaped like a sick man's dreams, so that neither head nor foot can be assigned to a single shape. 'Painters and poets,' you say, 'have always had an equal right in hazarding anything.' We know it: this licence we poets claim and in our turn we grant the like; but not so far that savage should mate with tame, or serpents couple with birds, lambs with tigers. (Horace, 1936, p. 451)

Horace's chimaera seems to prefigure Woolf's 'monster' figure in *A Room of One's Own*: 'a worm winged like an eagle; the spirit of life and beauty in a kitchen chopping up suet' (*AROO*, p. 44). Significantly, there is another chimaera-like mutant figure in the draft of *A Room of One's Own*: 'a lamb with a dogs head' is listed amongst the co-signs of patriarchal government (*WF*, pp. 50–1).

It is in the context of a painting-poetry comparison that Woolf earlier cites Johnson's dog – and in connection with the dumb-sister art of painting – in the essay "Pictures" (1925). "Pictures" addresses Woolf's recurring and significant preoccupation with writing and the visual arts. It is written in the voice of a writer viewing modern paintings, conscious that painting is an alien, perhaps even an inferior art to writing:

> A story-telling picture is as pathetic and ludicrous as a trick played by a dog, and we applaud it only because we know it is as hard for a painter to tell a story with his brush as it is for a sheep dog to balance a biscuit on its nose. Dr Johnson at the Mitre is much better told by Boswell; in paint Keats's nightingale is dumb; with half a sheet of notepaper we can tell all the stories of all the pictures in the world [. . .] Picasso, Sickert, Mrs Bell [. . .] all are mute as mackerel. (*DM*, pp. 176–8)

Woolf's 'we applaud' and 'we know' and 'we can tell' echoes the Horation 'we know it' and 'we [. . .] claim' and 'we grant'. Her assertions of the writer's superiority over the painter and the narratorial

short-comings of painting, here and in other essays, echo Johnson's own comments, in *The Idler*, on the multiple imagery and sentiment possible in poetry but not achievable in painting:

> All these images fill the mind, but will not compose a picture, because they cannot be united in a single moment. [. . .] The action must be circumstantial and distinct. There is a passage in the *Iliad* [XXI 34–135] which cannot be read without strong emotions [. . .] This cannot be painted, because no peculiarity of attitude or disposition can so supply the place of language as to impress the sentiment. (Johnson, 1793, vol. 1, p. 128)

But Woolf's endorsement of writing over painting may also betray a feminist undercurrent. The reference to Dr Johnson in close proximity to dog tricks playfully positions 'dumb' painters, male and female, including Woolf's own 'Dumb Sister' Mrs Bell, in the place the patriarch Johnson has previously marked out for women preachers (and by extension, women poets) – the performing, drilled, or dancing dog. Johnson himself (or his portrait) may even seem to be placed, in Woolf's analogy, as the biscuit balanced on the dog's nose. This citation draws on a number of Johnsonian sources including his remarks on the virtues of an 'antique marble dog [. . .] valued at a thousand guineas' which prompts Johnson's interlocutor to declare: 'The representation of no animal whatever is worth so much. At this rate a dead dog would indeed be better than a living lion.' Johnson replies by defending not the subject matter, but the artist's virtuosity in representing the dog: 'Sir, it is not the worth of the thing, but of the skill in forming it which is so highly estimated. Every thing that enlarges the sphere of human powers, that shows man he can do what he thought he could not do, is valuable.' To illustrate the point about painterly skill, he brings on a balancing act: 'The first man who balanced a straw upon his nose [. . .] in short, all such men deserved the applause of mankind, not on account of the use of what they did, but of the dexterity which they exhibited' (Boswell, 1971, vol. 3, p. 32). Woolf's sophisticated citation of this material in "Pictures" encourages us to acknowledge the limiting, silencing effect of the visual imagery of Johnson's dog tropes, and to celebrate the verbal, poetic voice symbolised by Keat's nightingale (which in turn may refer us to a feminist mythopoetics concerned with the voicing of visual texts).

In this slippery and irony-laden text Woolf brings Johnson's dog to heel (and to silence) along side Keats's nightingale and a tank of mute

mackerel. While it looks less like aesthetic evolution and more like genetic accident, this cluster of figures may nevertheless contribute to Woolf's on-going construction of a feminist *Ars Poetica*. The dog joins Woolf's stock menagerie, each figure in which has a particular poetic and aesthetic pedigree worth investigating carefully – more carefully, probably, than I have been able to show here – before we can understand the new hybrid creatures Woolf constructs for feminist aesthetics. There is more than a touch of Johnson's dog in the genetic soup from which Woolf figures her new feminist aesthetics.

If a thought put into new words is for Johnson 'the old dog in a new doublet' – so we may also see the Johnsonian dog as a figure *standing* for (pardon the pun) rhetorical figures. However, Woolf's refiguring of Johnson's dog almost amounts to *catachresis* – misuse, which provides an appalling punning link to my next attempt to gloss Woolf's marked interest in dog tropes. Given that 1928 was also the year of full enfranchisement to women, and given my interest in the influence on Woolf's work of suffragist and suffrage-related aesthetics, I have been trying to find out if anti-suffrage iconography ever figured women as dogs on hinder legs. But interestingly, I have so far only found examples of women as *cats* in anti-suffrage propaganda! This may provide a fruitful gloss on the Manx cat in *A Room of One's Own* (which deformed creature, perhaps representing lack, Woolf reminds us, lives in the Isle of *Man* (*AROO*, p. 13). This constitutes the point of impasse in my current work in progress, *Virginia Woolf and the Signifying Dog*. Woolf's continuing, pointed and playful engagement with misogynist canine tropes in most of her fiction prior to *Flush*, hitherto acknowledged as her only canine aberration, and in her feminist manifesto, *A Room of One's Own*, encouraged me to look for a politically significant dog, or representation of a dog, in the public sphere, possibly one of suffragist (or anti-suffragist) significance.

Mr Carlyle and Mrs Woolf

My Signifying Dog thesis obtains where Woolf negotiates the 'battlefield' of Carlyle's house, from the cast of Carlyle's death-mask to a portrait of his tormented wife (in whose eyes 'bitterness and suffering mingle') *via* the garden: 'not a place of rest and recreation, but another smaller battlefield marked with a tombstone beneath which a dog lies buried' (*LS*, p. 40, p. 41). Arthur Conan Doyle's earlier fictional account, in *A Duet* (1899), of a young couple on a guided tour of Carlyle's house, similarly points up the cast of Carlyle, 'the subterranean [. . .] gloomy kitchen', the dog's grave in the garden. The episode closes with the

wife's concern that her husband does not 'turn out a second Carlyle' (Conan Doyle, 1899, p. 311; p. 315; p. 316), an expression that plays on the capacity of the sculptor's cast to issue further copies of its original. It replicates too the words of Woolf's father at the death of her mother: 'I was not as bad as Carlyle was I?' (Lee, 1996, p. 93).

The Carlyles' hierarchised marital relations also feature in Woolf's famous statement, elsewhere, on the revolutionary social changes of 1910 (*CDB*, p. 96). Carlyle's prolific creativity, Woolf and Conan Doyle both emphasise, is buttressed by his talented wife's domestic servitude. "Great Men's Houses" inserts a canine figure in this marital hierarchy. Woolf's term 'tombstone' (Carlyle's is 'tablet' (Carlyle, 1883, vol. 2, p. 92)) has us trotting back, with the scent of Carlyle, to the (racialised) trope of the dog marking the 'tombstone' in the 'fine negress' passage in *A Room of One's Own*.[9] That the dog's grave is a Woolfian signifier representing the historic, unequal struggles between men and women over artistic subjectivity seems confirmed by the dog's name. I have yet to discover why the Carlyles called their white dog Nero, but I do know his ancient imperial name-sake's legendary dying words: 'Qualis Artifex Pereo' ('What an artist is lost with me!') (Suetonius, XLIX.1). Woolf reviewed the Carlyles' letters, which fulsomely document Nero's antics, including 'danc[ing] around [Carlyle] on his hind legs', some, indeed, in his voice.[10] Nero also features in *Flush*, which notes his suicidal leap from a window, and his lingering death after the wheels of a butcher's cart crushed his throat (*F*, p. 184). Nero's fate and Flush's nausea at Carlyle's name serve to confirm his preference for the democratic freedoms of Italy over the inequities of England.[11]

Nero's silent grave provides sombre contrast, in "Great Men's Houses", to 'the bark of dogs fetching and carrying sticks' heard outside John Keats's house, where, in spite of 'death masks [. . .] and other grisly memorials', Woolf finds, 'life goes on' (*LS*, p. 43). Taking Woolf's six London essays '*as a whole*',[12] this grave becomes a significant counterpoint to London's grand public memorial statuary in other essays, particularly, "Abbeys and Cathedrals" and "This is the House of Commons". Woolf's well-noted tropes of industrial processing include references to statuary and monument production, and therefore should also be read aesthetically, I suggest, with reference to the sculptor's art of casting. Laval, relief imagery pervades the essays. If a 'true letter' is for Woolf, 'as a film of wax pressed close to the graving in the mind' (*L*1, p. 282), then perhaps we might understand her London essays similarly as a verbal cast. A literary equivalent and antecedent to Rachel Whiteread's sculpture, they cast not only a room or house but a whole city. The dead

Carlyle's cast is an important figurative hinge in this respect, appearing in the essay that mediates "The Docks of London" and "This is the House of Commons".

The closing essay, "Portrait of a Londoner", features the moribund Mrs Crowe, a creepy London hostess, personified vortex of the imperial, commercial, industrial, political, cultural and memorialising processes charted in the preceding essays. Crowe returns us in fictionalised form to the domestic darkness of Carlyle's household. But Carlyle is also present, in intertextual form, in the opening essay, "The Docks of London", which describes the arrival and processing of goods from every global quarter to service the somatic demands of the imperial centre. The ensuing essays chart the progress of imperial goods, in terms of labour, commerce and politics, up-river through the physical geography of London from the docks via Bond Street and Westminster, to the sinister Mrs Crowe's house. Like the chartered Thames Woolf depicts earlier, Mrs Crowe is a Blakean figure. But the textual provenance of the 'sacks of cinnamon' (*LS*, p. 18), among the goods at the docks, is with Carlyle, a writer on the other side of the Thames (in every sense) from William Blake.[13] Carlyle's notorious pamphlet, "The Nigger Question", likens black people to dogs, figuring as 'a tropical dog-kennel' the domain of those who disrupt imperial trade in 'those sugars, cinnamons, and nobler products of the West India Islands'.[14] Woolf shows Carlyle's 'quite visible role in [the imperial] process', and mocks 'the monumentalising of his house by the English culture industry' (McVicker, 2004, p. 149), a commodifying process extending to the casting of the man himself in death.[15]

The impasse came when I looked for the kind of precise material correlation I began to suspect Woolf's re-signification of Johnson's dog-signifier was also signalling. Convinced as I am of Woolf's sophisticated engagement with suffragist aesthetics and iconography,[16] fascinated by the politically charged representational tug-of-war her canine tropes conduct, I was looking for a dog, or the representation of a dog, in the public sphere, one of potent political, and suffragist (or anti-suffragist) significance; a 'battlefield' dog of more obvious contemporary significance than Carlyle's long dead Nero. Further in this representational mire, I was reminded of the elusive Mrs Brown, Woolf's figure in "Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown", for 'life itself' (*CDB*, p. 119), that which inadequate materialist novelists fail to represent. Why call her Mrs *Brown*, she who represents that which evades representation? What happened in 1910 to make Mrs Brown change? Is she mother to the 'million [. . .] Miss Browns' who 'scuttle and hurry, swing off omnibuses, dive into tubes' in Woolf's

London essay, "Abbeys and Cathedrals" (*LS*, p. 50)? Like them, she seems inseparable from her chosen mode of municipal public transport. Laura Doyle writes perceptively of Woolf's 'linger[ing] in a tingling, Brownian zone of encounter between self and other' (Doyle, 2004, p. 1); in this Brownian zone of 'significant otherness', I see Mrs Brown accompanied by a (brown) dog.[17] The Brownian zone may be a Deleuzian figure of becoming-woman, becoming-dog. Indeed, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari invoke Woolf's 'thin dog' figure, who both 'runs down the street' and '*is* the street', for their key concept of 'haecceity', the 'rhizome'. 'This is how we need to feel', they declare (Deleuze and Guattari, 1992, p. 263).[18] But what happens when the dog is (forcibly) taken out of the street? This can happen (as we will see). Yet the street (its inhabiting history) cannot so readily be taken out of the dog.

Mrs Woolf and the little brown dog

The impasse passed in June 2003 on a tour of Battersea with a local friend, who announced: 'Of course, there are no public statues in Battersea . . .'[19] Battersea's one great, infamous exception, I learned, was the Statue of the Little Brown Dog.[20] Battersea is just across the river from Carlyle's Chelsea house. In what follows I see Battersea in 'Brownian' relief, a Blakean 'contrary' state, to Carlyle's Chelsea. 'Battersea Park' Woolf herself finds 'one of the possessions which people in Chelsea secretly pride themselves upon' (*L4*, p. 127). Her declaration on the obsolescence of 'the small separate statue' seems so pertinent to Battersea.

> But if the days of the small separate statue are over, why should not the age of architecture dawn? [. . .] One would rather like to be a small nameless animal in a vast cathedral. Let us rebuild the world then as a splendid hall; let us give up making statues and inscribing them with impossible virtues.
>
> Let us see whether democracy which makes halls cannot surpass the aristocracy which carved statues. But there are still innumerable policemen. A blue giant stands at every door to see that we do not hurry on with our democracy too fast. (*LS*, pp. 70–1)

Woolf's vision of the dawning of the 'age of architecture' and her stipulation to 'give up making statues' are significantly followed by the recorded desire to 'be a small nameless animal in a vast cathedral'. It may be tempting to understand this creature as Jacob's irreverent dog 'approaching a pillar with a purpose' (*JR*, p. 33) but Woolf's contrasting

of the vastness of the building with the smallness of the creature emphasises both the anonymity of the creature and its powerlessness. The individual creature is so overwhelmed by the architecture, it seems incapable, indeed, of cocking a leg. Westminster's elitist, individualist, statuary, Woolf argues, will cede to new architecture erected by progressive politics. The essay in fact closes with a call for synthesis. Democracy, deferred for a century (like Shakespeare's sister), 'will come' (*LS*, p. 70, 71, 72), just as Shakespeare's sister 'will come' (*AROO*, p. 114), by combining collective with individual. Communal, architectural context frames statuary's individual personality. In Westminster Hall, however, stand 'blue giant[s]': policemen (*LS*, p. 71). These 'regulatory figures', one critic notes, interrupt Woolf's 'democratic dreams' (Cuddy-Keane, 2003, p. 51). Yet Woolf's 'dream' of a democratic public sphere, uncluttered by aristocracy's pernicious statuary, but also not free of police surveillance, was already a reality in the radical Borough of Battersea.

Under a left-wing council since 1900, Battersea 'acquired a national reputation as a hotbed of alternative politics and a breeding ground for trade unionism, republicanism, anti-colonialism, municipal socialism, Irish home rulers, suffragettes – and anti-vivisectionists' (Mason, 1977, p. 24). Battersea elected Britain's first black Mayor (a Pan-Africanist) in 1913, and an Italian-Asian Communist MP in the 1920s. The 'distinct lack of statues or memorials' is, for one historian, 'no doubt due to the Council's lack of deference to Royalty or personalities' (Loobey, 2002, p. 5). The exceptional statue, erected to the memory of 'the brown terrier done to death in the laboratories of University College',[21] became the focal point of running battles between several political factions. The working-class joined anti-vivisectionists and suffragettes in defending it against reactionaries, conservatives, 'progressive' scientists and students.

The repeated vivisections performed on the dog, and its death (by stabbing), at the hands of London University staff, are related in 'Fun', an ironically titled chapter of *The Shambles of Science* (1903) by two Swedish feminist anti-vivisectionists, enrolled as students at the London School of Medicine. A highly publicised libel trial followed,[22] in the aftermath of which anti-vivisectionists commissioned a bronze statue of the Brown Dog from memorial sculptor, Joseph Whitehead. It was unveiled in Battersea's Latchmere Recreation Ground in September 1906. The controversy over the dead dog it commemorated necessitated from the start an electric alarm, and, very soon, heavy and permanent police guard. It was attacked in 1907 by medical students, who also rioted in Trafalgar Square. In 1909 Battersea returned a less

radical council, which, despite a huge counter rally in Trafalgar Square in support of the dog, stealthily removed the monument in the auspicious year 1910, the year, Woolf famously identified, when 'human character changed' (*CDB*, p. 96). The Brown Dog affair hit the national press; questions were asked in the House concerning its fate and the expense of police protection. The statue, destroyed in 1911, remains a signifier of considerable cultural and political freight. Representing not only the dog, but also the power struggles between variously allied factions, it is a vanished icon of the political turbulence of 1910. Like the Carlyles' dog's grave, it constitutes a 'battlefield' in gender, race and class war. Anti-vivisectionists, suffragettes and others fought the patriarchs of London University over the representation of a dog killed in the laboratories to which women themselves had only recently gained access. Parallels resonate in Woolf's writing. *A Room of One's Own*, for example, a tract on women's access to education, with distinctly canine tropes, features the shared laboratory of Chloe and Olivia, and several allusions to eugenics, which are further explored in *Flush*.[23]

Let us not forget the statue's utilitarian, municipal function. Following Woolf's interest in the architectural context of public statuary, we note its site in Latchmere Gardens, flanked by Reform Street and Freedom Street. The atmosphere is not unlike the idealised, urban, public garden space in Woolf's London essay, "Abbeys and Cathedrals" (echoing too Blake's 'Echoing Green'): 'those old graveyards which have become gardens and playgrounds' where 'the tombstones no longer serve to mark the graves, but line the walls with their white tablets' or play 'the part of garden ornament'. In this transformed, feminised, memorialising collective space 'mothers and nursemaids gossip; children play; and the old beggar, after eating his dinner from a paper bag, scatters crumbs to the sparrows. These garden graveyards are the most peaceful of our London sanctuaries and their dead the quietest' (*LS*, pp. 58–9). Similarly, the charm of the Brown Dog lay in its status 'not as a work of art but as a utilitarian tribute to a cause. It was a fountain, not a statue; plain and unfussy, like the working class homes which surrounded it [. . .] something for the local people to adopt as their own' (Mason, 1977, p. 38). This collective fountain served not only people, but the companion species too. Beneath the bronze dog was a drinking fountain for humans; beneath that, a small trough for dogs.

Pointed reference to 'the little brown dog' appears in *Flush*:

> Miss Barrett, too, did her best to refine and educate his powers still further. Once she took a harp from the window and asked him,

> as she laid it by his side, whether he thought that the harp, which made music, was itself alive? He looked and listened; pondered, it seemed, for a moment in doubt and then decided that it was not. Then she would make him stand with her in front of the looking-glass and ask him why he barked and trembled. Was not the little brown dog opposite himself? But what is 'oneself'? Is it the thing people see? Or is it the thing one is? So Flush pondered that question too, and, unable to solve the problem of reality, pressed closer to Miss Barrett and kissed her 'expressively.' *That* was real at any rate. [. . .] Flush 'is no hero,' she concluded; but why was he no hero? (*F*, pp. 55–6)

This canine-philosophical passage rehearses the popular canine ethics of books like *On Immortality*: *A Letter to a Dog* (1916) by Lizzie Lind-af-Hageby, the feminist champion of the original Little Brown Dog, where boundaries between human and animal are probed, and questions of canine subjectivity raised.

Flush, many critics note, contrasts the class-ridden, hierarchised urban geography of London with the more democratic, egalitarian public spaces of Italy, where Flush 'becom[es] daily more [. . .] democratic' (*F*, p. 125). But Woolf also shows Florence's open-air statuary (albeit of human form) to provide comfort to Flush in just the way the Brown Dog fountain statue was meant to function in the politically advanced democratic grove of Latchmere, London:

> Stretched beneath a statue, couched under the lip of a fountain for the sake of the few drops that spurted now and again on to his coat, he would lie dozing by the hour. The young dogs would come about him. To them he would tell his stories of Whitechapel and Wimpole Street; he would describe the smell of clover and the smell of Oxford Street; he would rehearse his memories of one revolution and another – how Grand Dukes had come and Grand Dukes had gone; but the spotted spaniel down the alley on the left – she goes on for ever, he would say. [. . .] Flush sought the shade. He flung himself down beside his friend Catterina, under the shadow of her great basket. A brown jar of red and yellow flowers cast a shadow beside it. Above them a statue, holding his right arm out-stretched, deepened the shade to violet. (*F*, p. 155–65)

As Flush dozes 'beneath a statue, couched under the lip of a fountain', he recalls a politically turbulent, class-ridden English life. Like the Little Brown Dog, he is both a memorial to and reminder of 'one revolution

and another', and the emblem of democratic beneficence. He languishes with female companions in the 'violet' shade of Italian public fountain statuary, a colour that also connects with Battersea's Brown Dog, adorned to this day, even in its second incarnation, in suffrage colours. Woolf's description delicately poises Flush's democratic idyll, then, alongside reminders of darker, more turbulent, political moments. Indeed, Anna Snaith convincingly reads *Flush*'s nineteenth century Italy through Woolf's contemporary knowledge of the emergent Italian fascist state and fascist politics closer to home;[24] and this reading may be endorsed if the jar's colour is understood, not as a reference to Battersea's democratic brown dog, but as the fascist colour brown, and if the raised right arm of the statue is understood as a fascist salute. My reading of the novel through the London essays, and through the cultural resonances of the Brown Dog Affair, does not contradict this more sinister interpretation of these key images, but recognises Woolf's capacity to put forward a dual vision from the same imagery. Woolf's glimpses of canine democratic groves represent alternative but achievable realities to the emergent fascist and Nazi dictatorships of the 1930s.

Battersea's original Brown Dog statue vanished, but there *is* a statue commemorating the first statue. Erected in 1985, significantly *not* in Latchmere Gardens, but some way off in a discreet corner of Battersea Park, this new signifier of a signifier of a dog (by Nicola Hicks) replicates (and expands on) the original's lengthy inscription. Sadly, it lacks a fountain for humans or dogs. Where the original bronze stood in Latchmere Gardens is the sign: 'NO DOGS ALLOWED IN THIS PLAYGROUND'. Locals continue to campaign for the reinstatement of their cherished dog-fountain. While the dog is no longer *in* Latchmere Gardens, flanked by Reform Street and Freedom Street, this earlier libertarian context, I suggest, is still *in* the dog, even in its new doublet, even in Battersea Park.

Cruelly termed Woolf's tombstone, *Flush*'s stock rises in an era when a disappearing dog tops the best-sellers, and a reprieved dog features in mainstream cinema; when philosophers write serious works on dogs, and feminist philosophers write canine manifestos.[25] 'Testimony to the lives that will never be narrated, the inscrutable and unrepresentable' (Caughie, 1991, p. 52), Flush is a signifier of that which cannot be represented or resists representation. But like the little brown dog, Woolf's canine signifiers may also mark, and be marked as, that which has been refused representation (Haraway's 'improperly registered'). They signify too the streets they have run in.

Notes

1. This essay has two progenitors: (i) the new memorial to Virginia Woolf, which was unveiled in Tavistock Square Gardens at the close of the Fourteenth Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf, held in Bloomsbury, London in June 2004; (ii) an impasse in my current work in progress, *Virginia Woolf and the Signifying Dog*.
2. Woolf wrote six essays on London for the magazine *Good Housekeeping* between 1931 and 1932: "The Docks of London", December 1931; "Oxford Street Tide", January 1932; "Great Men's Houses", March 1932; "Abbeys and Cathedrals", May 1932; "This is the House of Commons", 1, October 1932; "Portrait of a Londoner", December 1932. The first five were republished in *The London Scene* in limited edition by Frank Hallman (New York, 1975), and the Hogarth Press (London, 1982). All six essays appear in a new edition of *The London Scene*, published by Snowbooks (London, 2004), to which this essay refers throughout.
3. See Note 2.
4. Dogs are allowed in, on a leash.
5. The argument in the following section is partially drawn from Jane Goldman, "Who let the dogs out?: Virginia Woolf and Dr Johnson", unpublished paper (Woolf Conference, Bangor, 2001).
6. Samuel Johnson, *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755), vol. 1; Johson cites Addison, *Spectator*, No. 209.
7. This passage is the focus of my essay: "'Ce chien est à moi': Virginia Woolf and the Signifying Dog."
8. See Louise DeSalvo, *Virginia Woolf's First Voyage*: *A Novel in the Making* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1980), p. 25.
9. Intriguingly, long before Woolf wrote of it, indeed before Carlyle himself died, the dog's 'tombstone' had vanished. It was stolen, in fact, according to the National Trust people at Carlyle's House.
10. Woolf, "The Letters of Jane Welsh Carlyle" (1905) and "More Carlyle Letters" (1909), *The Essays of Virginia Woolf* vol. 1; "Geraldine and Jane", *Common Reader*: *Second Series*.
11. See Susan Squier, *Virginia Woolf and London*: *The Sexual Politics of the City* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985).
12. See Jeanette McVicker, "'Six Essays on London Life': A History of Dispersal" Parts I and II, *Woolf Studies Annual* 9 and 10.
13. Woolf records her 'discovery' of William Blake's house, in a letter to Clive Bell (6 February 1930).
14. See Thomas Carlyle, *Occasional Discourses on the Nigger Question* (1853). I am grateful to the Woolf scholar, Tuzyline Allan for alerting me to the possible significance of this pamphlet in Woolf's writing.
15. As for Woolf's own casting and monumentalising by the English culture industry, I would be first in the queue for a miniature replica of the replica of Tomlin's bust of Woolf, when the cultural custodians get to it. Indeed bronze medallions of Woolf were on sale at the recent conference on Woolf in Bloomsbury, London.
16. See Jane Goldman, *The Feminist Aesthetics of Virginia Woolf*: *Modernism, Post-Impressionism and the Politics of the Visual* (Cambridge: Cambridge

University Press, 1998); "'Purple Buttons on Her Bodice': Feminist History and Iconography in *The Waves*", *Woolf Studies Annual* 2; "Virginia Woolf and Post-Impressionism: French Art, English Theory and Feminist Practice", *Miscelánea*: *A Journal of English and American Studies* ('Anglophone Modernism and Europe'), 20 (1999).

17. Mrs Brown famously appears in a railway carriage in "Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown". Interestingly, in a glass case at Slough Station there is a Victorian, stuffed brown dog called 'Station Jim', famed for riding around on trains, but sadly not for his views on women's suffrage.
18. The 'thin dog' appears in Woolf's reading of Katherine Mansfield's technique, in "A Terribly Sensitive Mind" (1927).
19. Paul Cook, the dedicatee of this essay.
20. A 'futuristic' war memorial was erected in 1924 in a corner of Battersea Park, but let this pass. See Lord Edward Gleichan, *London's Open Air Statuary*, p. 171.
21. Inscription on the Little Brown Dog fountain statue (1906); Peter Mason, *The Brown Dog Affair* (London: Two Sevens Publishing, 1977), p. 26.
22. Unpublished related papers are held in the University of London archives.
23. Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, pp. 125–6. See also: Woolf, *Flush*, p. 110; Anna Snaith, "Of Fanciers, Footnotes, and Fascism: Virginia Woolf's *Flush*"; Judith Allen, "Flush and 'the deformity of words'", unpublished paper; David Bradshaw, "Eugenics: 'They should certainly be killed'", *A Concise Companion to Modernism*.
24. See Snaith "Of Fanciers, Footnotes, and Fascism: Virginia Woolf's *Flush*."
25. Mark Haddon, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (2004); J. M. Coetzee, *Disgrace* (1999); Raimond Gaita, *The Philosopher's Dog* (2003); Giorgio Agamben, *The Open*: *Man and Anima*l (2004); Donna Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto*: *Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness* (2003). Note too the persistent rash of performing dogs in advertisements for everything from vodka to car insurance.

5
Virginia Woolf as Policy Analyst

Craufurd D. Goodwin

The collection of friends known as the Bloomsbury Group has been described variously as a 'school', a 'set', a 'clique', a 'coterie' and in other less complimentary terms. There was difference of opinion within the Group over who the members were, and even over whether it existed. The hard core of the Group comprised Lytton Strachey, Leonard and Virginia Woolf, Clive and Vanessa Bell, John Maynard Keynes, Desmond McCarthy, Roger Fry, E. M. Forster, Duncan Grant and Saxon Sydney-Turner. Others often included are Dora Carrington, David and Angelica Garnett, Quentin Bell and Frances Partridge. Some observers have seen the Group as simply an extension of the 'Apostles', the secret society to which several of the original male members belonged while at Cambridge, and where they rejoiced in profound discussions of such topics as truth, beauty and love.[1] Some have tended to think of the Group as mainly a pleasant environment in which brilliant and creative people could relax away from engagement with the activities for which they are individually well-known: the writing of novels, the construction of economic theory, the painting of pictures and literary criticism.[2] It may be useful to think of Bloomsbury in still another way as something like a 'think tank', people gathered together, in part at least to examine and propose solutions to demanding problems of the day. Even though the term 'think tank', did not gain currency until after World War II the institution appeared early in the twentieth century, sometimes centred around a discipline like philosophy or economics (the Vienna Circle in Austria or the National Bureau of Economic Research in the United States), or a new political ideology like socialism (The Fabian Society, with which Leonard and Virginia Woolf were involved), sometimes around a single problem like foreign policy (the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and The Royal Institute for International Affairs,

Chatham House). Sometimes a think tank reflected the optimism of a wealthy patron that it could do good works (The Brookings Institution and the Russell Sage Foundation). That Virginia Woolf understood the concept of a think tank can be seen in her short story "The Society" One of the characters suggests that when addressing problems they should go to the heart of the matter, human behaviour, advice that she followed in her own work: 'All this time we have been talking of aeroplanes, factories, and money. Let us talk about men themselves and their arts, for that is the heart of the matter' (*CSF*, p. 131).

Think tanks were the result of several historical trends. By the end of the nineteenth century the franchise had increased to such an extent that many new voters demanded a say in public affairs; in their zeal to understand the world around them these voters provided an enthusiastic audience for the publications and pronouncements of think tanks. Business entrepreneurs often were equally impatient about reform and were willing to pay for the generation of new ideas. Academics, long consigned intellectually to the ivory tower while events engulfed them outside, welcomed the opportunity to extend their professional lives through think tanks and make use of skills that they were convinced could be useful to society. Governments, though usually ambivalent about the existence of full-time critics, found many ways in which think tanks could be useful to them. Typically early think tanks were multi-disciplinary, experimental and ephemeral. Bloomsbury qualifies on all these counts. A distinguishing characteristic of the successful think tanks is that they considered success to lie in their capacity to illuminate a problem, not necessarily to solve it or to engage in current struggles surrounding it. In this paper the policy interests that were addressed by Bloomsbury are briefly set forth, and their distinctive method of approach described. Their engagement with current events surrounding the issues that concerned them is not examined here; for the most part this has been covered well in the numerous biographies and monographs that have been published about the individual members. Then a 'think tank reading' of Virginia Woolf's particular contribution is undertaken. Her works are examined alongside the analytical works of other 'Bloomsberries', which suggests that they used similar methods and pursued similar goals. Beyond Virginia Woolf's achievements as a novelist she may be seen also as a contributor to the collective policy engagement of Bloomsbury. The thesis of this paper is that there was a distinctive Bloomsbury way of addressing problems and Virginia Woolf employed it in the same way as did other members of the Bloomsbury Group.

Think tank Bloomsbury

The initial inspiration for policy inquiry was provided for Bloomsbury by two of its most prominent members at the end of World War I. Lytton Strachey through his four biographical essays brought together as *Eminent Victorians* (1918) demonstrated that the time was ripe for a fresh look at the military, the church, secondary education and the Victorian home. John Maynard Keynes a year later in his *Economic Consequences of the Peace* condemned what he considered absurdity in the conduct of international affairs. Both Strachey and Keynes reached an exceptionally wide audience and had remarkable impact. Clearly the invitation was there for others to follow. By the 1930s several members of the Bloomsbury Group had identified a wide range of topics about which they were convinced more needed to be known, new policies proposed, and perhaps actions taken. Most of these topics were presented as failures of the market economy and the Victorian society that surrounded it. Keynes observed that modern economies were often dangerously unstable, yielding unemployment, stagnation and wide price fluctuations. The consequences could be not only human suffering but also civil insurrection and threats to democracy and personal liberty. The international economic system by the same token seemed unable to cope with instability and global crises; and here the consequence could be warfare. The institutions of the world economy, Keynes insisted, required a complete reconsideration, especially with the imminent demise of empires.

Leonard Woolf's policy concerns emerged from what he saw as the inconsistency of social expectations. He observed that in the eighteenth century newly enfranchised citizens of the United States and France, and by implication those of other countries too, were promised 'liberty, equality, and fraternity.' Instead, in the nineteenth century they found themselves increasingly entrapped within an urban proletariat labour force, and facing unequal distribution of income and wealth, through competition rather than cooperation with fellows (L. Woolf, 1931, pp. 82–153). E. M. Forster focused on, among other things, the destruction of the natural environment, and the impracticality of sustaining imperial relationships as the basis for a successful world order.[3] David Garnett wrote about problems of women and minorities in society and looked ahead to problems that would be presented by immigration to Britain from former colonies.[4] Roger Fry worried that literature, science and the arts could not stand up effectively to competing forces in the market economy without some kind of external intervention.[5] Virginia Woolf addressed problems of inequality faced by women in the work

force and in the home, and the resulting difficulties they encountered in achieving what she called 'civilisation'. [6]

Certain common features stand out in the Bloomsbury approach to policy issues. First, their norms remained rooted for the most part in the influential texts of their youth, especially G. E. Moore's *Principia Ethica* (1903) that had privileged 'states of consciousness, which may be roughly described as the pleasures of human intercourse and the enjoyment of beautiful objects' (Moore, 1993, p. 237) and Roger Fry's "An Essay in Aesthetics" (1909) that had explored the nature of the arts as a critical component of the 'imaginative lives' of humans. For the Bloomsbury Group, these norms came to mean an emphasis on truth, beauty, love and friendship. They rejected the Benthamite emphasis on utility as a criterion for human existence, and they spoke instead of 'civilisation' that would make possible the desired states of consciousness. Keynes reflected in a memoir: 'it was such a big advantage for us to have escaped from the Benthamite tradition. But I do now regard that as the worm which has been gnawing at the insides of modern civilisation and is responsible for its present moral decay' (Keynes, 1949, p. 96). They reached out widely to many disciplines and bodies of knowledge to gain insights, and they were seldom intimidated by territorial boundaries rooted in academe. They shared a deep distrust of strong national governments based more on their personal experiences during World War I than on any libertarian principles. Roger Fry was doubtful that government could solve the problems of the artist.[7] Keynes wanted only a few more advisers in government, not a ministry of economic affairs. Lytton Strachey's chapter on Florence Nightingale in *Eminent Victorians* is an indictment of the British military establishment by the son of an army general. But perhaps the most celebrated statement of the Bloomsbury position came from E. M. Forster who observed in his essay "What I believe", published just before World War II: 'all the great creative actions, all the decent human relations, occur during the intervals when force has not managed to come to the front' (Forster, 1951, p. 68). His endorsement even of democratic government was muted: 'it is less hateful than other contemporary forms of government, and to that extent it deserves our support' (Forster, 1951, p. 67). Forster offered an opinion about the importance of human relations over patriotism that gave Bloomsbury a bad name: 'if I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend I hope I should have the guts to betray my country' (Forster, 1951, p. 66).

These members of the Bloomsbury Group were anxious to convey their conclusions about public policy concerns to a wide public through

any device that was available: books, pamphlets, lectures, newspaper columns and radio broadcasts. They were avowedly non-doctrinaire about policy recommendations and were prepared to abandon them very quickly if better ones came along.

There was a distinctive method of Bloomsbury policy inquiry. Analysis typically went through three discernible stages: first the subject was examined from as many directions as possible so that it could be fully understood. Then relatively moderate policy changes were proposed to deal with problems based usually on institutional reform and some modest redistribution of income and wealth. In the initial approaches to a problem Bloomsbury tended to employ the conventional methods of the social scientist. But, most important, unlike any other well-known think tank they also employed fiction as a way of getting ideas out for discussion. Explanations of events and proposals for reform came out of the mouths of characters in novels and short stories not with the authors necessarily believing or endorsing them but because these ideas had become part of the conversation on the topic and deserved some attention and reflection. Finally if moderate reforms were not successful the subject was re-opened usually with new tools from cultural anthropology, psychology, biography, classical mythology and any other body of knowledge that showed promise. For the most part in this third stage of inquiry the 'Bloomsberries' abandoned analysis based on the assumption of rational actors, and their recommendations for reform tended to be directed toward the demand side of the market economy. Fry explored how to stimulate the various components of the demand for the products of the arts. Keynes worried about how to sustain aggregate demand for goods and services in a recession, and Forster, drawing upon classical mythology, experimented with ways to stimulate public insistence upon the preservation of public lands and traditions. But in no case did the Group declare a problem solved forever and the matter closed.

In Bloomsbury fiction, in contrast to that of other novelists writing about policy issues such as H. G. Wells or Charles Dickens, novels were used primarily as an analytical tool in the open-ended first stage of inquiry rather than as a means of propagating a settled program of reform. The first example of a novel with this purpose on a grand scale is *Howards End* (1910) by E. M. Forster. Forster explores, or at least raises, a long list of questions examined by his Bloomsbury contemporaries over the next several decades: the causes and consequences of poverty, the significance of class distinctions, unemployment and its effects, charity and philanthropy, degradation of the environment and urban sprawl, neglect of local history and traditions, relegation of men

and women to fixed social roles, empire, militarism, nationalism, and the exhausting search by human beings for 'civilisation'. In this novel Forster stands back from these questions and does not, even by implication, take strong positions on what to do about them. His objective is to clarify problems and in places to muse about alternative responses. The early novels of the other writers in the Bloomsbury Group are similar in style. Leonard Woolf's *The Village in the Jungle* (1913) is an introduction to problems encountered when persons from one culture set out to govern another. David Garnett's fiction raises questions about how women and minorities are treated in society.[8]

Understanding Woolf's problem: women and civilisation

Against this brief description of Bloomsbury's analytical method how does Virginia Woolf look as policy analyst? Is it possible to understand her positions and recommendations when viewed against this background? It is apparent, first of all, that like the others she subscribed to improvement in 'states of consciousness' as the proper objective for policy. Her ultimate goal was not, she insisted, like that of so many reformers outside Bloomsbury, to reach certain predetermined objectives like the right to vote, or income equality. These achievements should be seen as no more than the means by which women could achieve the ultimate goal – civilisation. Indeed she rejected adherence to any fixed set of short-term targets that might distract reformers from the proper long-term goal, including the 'feminist' agenda as it was understood at the time. In a statement that has troubled many of her followers she claimed:

> the word [feminist] no longer has a meaning. And a word without a meaning is a dead word, a corrupt word. Let us therefore celebrate this occasion by cremating the corpse. Let us write that word in large black letters on a sheet of foolscap; then solemnly apply a match to the paper. (*TG*, p. 184)

Other members of the Bloomsbury Group often made similar statements about the crippling effects of ideologies and 'isms' that constrained free thought and stood in the way of civilisation, including formal religion, socialism and capitalism. To quote Forster once again:

> I do not believe in Belief. But this is an Age of Faith, and there are so many different creeds that, in self-defence, one has to formulate

> a creed of one's own. [. . .] Tolerance, good temper and sympathy – they are what matter really, and if the human race is not to collapse they must come to the front before long. (Forster, 1951, p. 65)

Consistent with the Bloomsbury method Woolf turned her subject over in fiction before examining it more conventionally. At several places in her writings Woolf probed the conditions that might lead to civilisation and that would open to women the life of the mind from which they had long been excluded. She wrote with approval of the 'the pure fluid, the essential oil of truth' (*AROO*, p. 25) by contrast with 'that hard little electric light which we call brilliance, as it pops in and out upon our lips' (*AROO*, p. 11). Perhaps remembering the Thursday evening discussions in the house she shared with her sister in Gordon Square, she wrote wistfully of 'the more profound, subtle and subterranean glow, which is the rich yellow flame of rational intercourse' (*AROO*, p. 11). Woolf opened up and turned over questions of how to liberate and empower women's minds and also to alleviate poverty in her first novel *The Voyage Out*, written in draft in the years before World War I when others in Bloomsbury were wrestling with similar questions. A reason for the absence of civilisation in Britain, one of the voyagers speculates, is poverty. As the ship departs London the passengers reflect on the prosperity and growth of the great city, but also its widespread human degradation. Could civilisation exist where so many were so poor? They saw the city as 'a crouched and cowardly figure, a sedentary miser' (*VO*, p. 11). England overall was 'a shrinking island in which people were imprisoned' (*VO*, p. 24). Keynes addressed this relationship between poverty and civilisation more than a decade later in his essay "Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren" (Keynes 1972 [1930]) and looked forward to a time one hundred years hence when economic growth might eliminate poverty and make widespread civilisation possible.

Mr Grice, the steward of the ship in *The Voyage Out*, suggests that the competitive evolutionary struggle, a process much discussed by reformers at the time, if allowed to proceed unabated, would solve the problem of poverty by removing the unselected from society, an eventuality generally abhorred by the Group. Those who remained, he implied, would presumably have a better chance of achieving civilisation because of their skill at navigating the economic system. This painful cleansing, he seemed to think, could be ameliorated through the sort of modest income redistribution implied in the works of Henry George: 'his

favourite reading was Huxley, Herbert Spencer, and Henry George; while Emerson and Thomas Hardy he read for relaxation' (*VO*, p. 46).

But if civilisation was, as Moore asserted and the 'Bloomsberries' believed, more than the goods and services delivered by a market economy, what was it? Woolf tried out different forms of Moore's prescription for truth and beauty in *The Voyage Out*. By so doing Woolf did not suggest that she knew the answers to Moore's questions, only that they were in the air. One character asks a variant of Moore's celebrated question 'What is the truth? What's the truth of it all?' (*VO*, p. 112). Another speculates that the problem lies with putting too many hedonists in charge of society: 'these were the people with money, and to them rather than to others was given the management of the world. Put among them some one more vital, who cared for life or for beauty' (*VO*, p. 123). One passenger expresses Roger Fry's view that creativity in the arts gives the greatest satisfaction in human life, more than possession of goods and services: 'there's an extraordinary satisfaction in writing, even in the attempt to write [. . .] one doesn't want to be things; one wants merely to be allowed to see them' (*VO*, p. 204). Conversation among friends before a warm fire might be another promising route to the desired states of consciousness: 'a great lamp swung above the table – the kind of lamp which makes the light of civilisation across dark fields to one walking in the country' (*VO*, p. 12). Might faith be a route to civilisation? Rachel, the heroine, makes it clear that formal religion and belief in the supernatural had no place in her search for civilisation. States of mind emerged from reason not from superstition:

> 'I believe in the bed, in the photographs, in the pot, in the balcony, in the sun, in Mrs. Flushing' she remarked, still speaking recklessly, with something at the back of her mind forcing her to say things that one usually does not say. 'But I don't believe in God, I don't believe in Mr. Bax [E. Belfort Bax, socialist writer on feminist issues], I don't believe in the hospital nurse. I don't believe–'. (*VO*, p. 236)

If civilisation should be the ultimate human objective, who might be the bearers of it? Scholars? Rachel was dubious. There was one on board who did not seem promising.

> He knew about a great many things – about mathematics, history, Greek, zoology, economics, and the Icelandic Sagas. He had turned Persian poetry into English prose, and English prose into Greek iambics;

> he was an authority upon coins, and – one other thing – oh yes, she thought it was vehicular traffic [. . .]
>
> 'Has he ever been in love?' asked Helen, who had chosen a seat.
>
> This was unexpectedly to the point.
>
> 'His heart's a piece of old shoe leather,' Rachel declared. (*VO*, p. 12)

William Pepper, a specialised scholar on board, seemed especially unqualified for the task of civiliser, rendered hopelessly pedantic by an excess of study: '"It's books', sighed Helen, lifting an armful of sad volumes from the floor to the shelf. 'Greek from morning to night. If ever Miss Rachel marries [. . .] pray that she may marry a man who doesn't know his ABC"' (*VO*, p. 23). Rachel wondered 'whether it was necessary that thought and scholarship should thus maltreat their bodies, and should thus elevate their minds to a very high tower from which the human race appeared to them like rats and mice squirming on the flat' (*VO*, p. 188).

The implication of the comments offered in *The Voyage Out* is that civilisation must come, as Clive Bell would argue in *Civilisation* (1928), not from academics but from a community of sensitive aesthetes who found inspiration in such writers as Henry Sidgwick, Edmund Burke, Edward Gibbon and Henrik Ibsen (*VO*, p. 123; p. 171). Woolf had hope also for the role of enlightened country gentlemen: 'They have never heard of Gibbon. They only care for their pheasants and their peasants [. . .] Those are the people, I feel, among whom Shakespeare will be born if he is ever born again. In those old houses, up among the Downs – ' (*VO*, p. 202).

Obstacles to women experiencing civilisation, even those who came from privileged environments, Woolf mentions in *The Voyage Out* as unsatisfactory education and gender prejudice. Rachel, the doomed heroine, complains that, like Virginia Woolf herself, her education as an upper middle class young woman had not equipped her to inquire into important areas of contemporary concern to search for truth. She had not been exposed to the more practical dimensions of civilisation: 'Finding her teachers inadequate, she had practically taught herself' (*VO*, p. 26). But even though self-taught she faced the irrational prejudice of men of all kinds who assumed that she must be ignorant. Richard Dalloway, a genial politician, remarks 'I have never met a woman who even saw what is meant by statesmanship. I am going to make you still angrier. I hope that I never shall meet such a woman' (*VO*, p. 58). Hirst, a recent Cambridge graduate who is uncertain about Rachel's capacity to understand Gibbon, says 'It's awfully difficult to tell about women [. . .] how much, I mean, is due to lack of training, and how much is native incapacity' (*VO*, p. 141). Rachel's response takes a distinctly physical form:

'Hirst's assumption of the superiority of his nature and experience had seemed to her not only galling but terrible – as if a gate had clanged in her face' (*VO*, p. 142). In her first novel and in the initial phase of coming to grips with the problem of how women might better achieve civilisation, Woolf does not pick out the path forward. She only raises the possibility that there is a path forward. There was always education: 'few things at the present time mattered more than the enlightenment of women. He sometimes thought that almost everything was due to education' (*VO*, p. 150). Reflecting Bloomsbury's doubts about government efficiency she does not explore programmes dependent upon government, instead private initiatives are discussed.

> She became very animated, as she talked on and on, for she professed herself certain that if once twenty people – no, ten would be enough if they were keen – set about doing things instead of talking about doing them, they could abolish almost every evil that exists. It was brains that were needed. If only people with brains – of course they would want a room, a nice room, in Bloomsbury preferably, where they could meet once a week. (*VO*, p. 303)

At this stage the question of gaining civilisation for women appears as a 'supply-side' issue in Woolf's writings; the problem of its inaccessibility lies with women themselves. It was necessary to know more about women: 'I believe we still don't know in the least how they live, or what they feel, or what they do precisely' (*VO*, p. 201). When more was known, presumably education could be improved, women could hold their own with men, and gender prejudice might naturally disappear as men discovered their equals. There was no reason to think that this would be easy; indeed, perhaps symbolically, Rachel dies tragically while receiving what her fiancé considers to be remedial education and before achieving her goal of equality.

Woolf's second novel *Night and Day* (1919) is no more optimistic than her first about the ease with which women might achieve civilisation. Obstacles and their solutions are once again raised for reflection rather than addressed directly. More characters appear in this novel who, like Rachel in *The Voyage Out*, were trapped in domestic duties and blocked by male prejudice. One 'could never for one moment detach her mind from the details of domestic life' and 'was capable of shorter and less frequent flights into the outer world' (*ND*, p. 28). The two heroines, Katharine Hilbery and Mary Datchet, from different segments of the middle class, seem potential candidates for civilisation. Yet, they are

constrained by family and social conventions. Katharine is suffocated by an overbearing literary father and obsequious mother who is trying, with Katharine's help, to write the hagiography of her famous father. In the Hilbery's drawing room, in principle at least, conditions for a rich life of the mind were ideal:

> In this little sanctuary were gathered together several different people, but their identity was dissolved in a general glory of something that might, perhaps, be called civilisation; at any rate all dryness, all safety, all that stood above the surge and preserved a consciousness of its own, was centred in the drawing-room of the Hilberys. (*ND*, pp. 418–19)

Even more so the dining-room: 'The lamps were lit; their lustre reflected itself in the polished wood; good wine was passed round the dinner-table; before the meal was far advanced civilisation had triumphed' (*ND*, p. 531). But these conditions were for naught. Katharine, after wasting her time on meaningless chores prescribed by her mother, feels compelled to accept marriage before she has a chance to spread her intellectual wings and reach her potential. The parts of the imaginative life that beckon Katharine are not literature or the arts, but pure mathematics – 'to know about the stars' (*ND*, p. 203), a subject that Bloomsbury included in its inventory of the imaginative life. '"One can be in love with pure reason?' She hazarded. 'Because if you're in love with a vision, I believe that that's what I'm in love with"' (*ND*, p. 449). She secretly studies mathematics in her bedroom as a guilty pleasure:

> upstairs alone in her room, she rose early in the morning or sat up late at night to ... work at mathematics. No force on earth would have made her confess that. Her actions when thus engaged were furtive and secretive, like those of some nocturnal animal. [. . .] Perhaps the unwomanly nature of the science made her instinctively wish to conceal her love of it. But the more profound reason was that in her mind mathematics was directly opposed to literature. (*ND*, p. 40)

The pursuit of truth for Katharine must involve 'that other part of life where thought constructs a destiny which is independent of human beings' (*ND*, p 350). By instinct Katharine was a theorist, not a social reformer: 'I don't care much whether I ever get to know anything – but I want to work out something in figures – something that hasn't got to do with human beings. I don't want people particularly' (*ND*, p. 203).

By contrast with Katharine Hilbery, Mary Datchet is a young, idealistic activist, concerned above all with people and committed to doing good by organising meetings and societies. She confronted and denounced all 'foes of the public good': 'capitalists, newspaper proprietors, anti-suffragists, and, in some ways most pernicious of all, the masses who take no interest one way or another' (*ND*, pp. 173–4). Her mind was more complex and less focused than Katharine's. While her work as an organiser was fulfilling and challenging it did not leave time for other things, and the socialist doctrine that guided her had little room for 'civilisation'. In the view of Katharine 'a world entrusted to the guardianship of Mary Datchet and Mr Basnett [another organiser] seemed to her a good world, although not a romantic or beautiful place or, to put it figuratively, a place where any line of mist softly linked tree to tree upon the horizon' (*ND*, p. 379).

The two main male characters in *Night and Day*, Ralph Denham and William Rodney, are far from being intellectual giants, but they receive encouragement to undertake imaginative endeavours never offered to the women. Ralph's education had set him on the right track. Yet these two also had accomplished little; their daily responsibilities had diverted them just as much as had those of the women. The main difference was that they seemed to appreciate more clearly what they had lost. Ralph remarked: 'I haven't written any poetry for years [. . .] it's the only thing worth doing [. . .] it keeps an ideal alive which might die otherwise' (*ND*, p. 152). The proposition is clear, that achieving civilisation is never easy, even for those starting from a privileged position.

In the decade following *Night and Day* Woolf continued to explore in her fiction how to achieve civilisation and the imaginative life, but her accounts are mainly of failure rather than success, among the men as well as the women. In *Mrs. Dalloway* several of the principal characters (Clarissa Dalloway, Sally Seton and Peter Walsh) seem firmly on the right course to reach the imaginative life, but as with Katharine and Mary, social conventions and family obligations distract them. Septimus Smith is crippled by war service and can no longer 'feel'. Orlando, in her time as a woman, is constrained by male prejudice and social conventions, inhibiting her creativity over several centuries. In *To the Lighthouse* the painter Lily Briscoe is faced with male prejudice insisting that women cannot paint or write.

Over the fifteen years from the publication of her first novel Virginia Woolf introduced in her fiction aspects of the challenge that she perceived women face in attempting to achieve the imaginative life. Of course, to give these ideas an airing was not the primary objective

of her fiction. Her books were both works of art and a means of making a living. But in using her fiction for the serious task of exploration of a problem that concerned her she was following closely the Bloomsbury method of inquiry.

Reaching the imaginative life: the solution

By 1928 when she delivered two lectures in Cambridge that became *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf concluded she knew the ultimate cause of women's failure to experience civilisation. What might have passed for explanations raised in her earlier works – poor education, male prejudice, family constraints, and social conventions – were manifestations of the problem, not its fundamental causes. The real cause was the maldistribution of income and wealth, and the solution was redistribution in some form. If women were provided with sufficient means, they would be able to claim their rights and find their own way to the imaginative life. Without the means they would forever remain in thrall: 'a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction' and 'One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well' (*AROO*, p. 4; p. 18). In taking this economically deterministic position she was following in the traditions of John Stuart Mill and the American Henry George, reformers of an earlier era who were revered by the Fabian Society. In the same way that the Fabians had claimed changes in property rights and a tax on the rent of land would solve problems ranging from Irish poverty to urban decay, she argued that increases in income and wealth would liberate women's minds based on her observation of 'what effect poverty has on the mind; and what effect wealth has on the mind' (*AROO*, p. 24). She traced the root of the economic inequity to the Middle Ages (*AROO*, pp. 9–10). The result was that women could not 'become a manufacturer of artificial silk [a reference to Samuel Courtauld, a friend of Bloomsbury] or a magnate on the Stock Exchange' (*AROO*, p. 21). To the question, 'Why are women poor?' the answer was simple 'England is under the rule of a patriarchy' (*AROO*, p. 28; p. 33). Moreover, the status quo was firmly established and would take time to dislodge. Gender roles had been firmly established: 'Women have served all these centuries as looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size' (*AROO*, p. 35). As a result of their coddling men became

> driven by instincts which are not within their control [. . .] the instinct for possession, the rage for acquisition which drives them to

> desire other people's fields and goods perpetually; to make frontiers and flags; battleships and poison gas; to offer up their own lives and their children's lives. [. . .] These are unpleasant instincts to harbour, I reflected. They are bred of the conditions of life, of the lack of civilisation. (*AROO*, pp. 38–9)

So what was to be done? Woolf called for economic reform. She was optimistic that with fair and open entry to the market economy women would change fundamentally: 'Money dignifies what is frivolous if unpaid for' (*AROO*, p. 65). Women would achieve parity with men through market equality. At present women felt alienated from those parts of the society that were traditionally reserved for men: 'in walking down Whitehall, when from being the natural inheritor of that civilisation, she becomes, on the contrary, outside of it, alien and critical' (*AROO*, p. 97). But if admitted freely to the economy the resentment will disappear: 'there may be some state of mind in which one could continue without effort because nothing is required to be held back' (*AROO*, p. 97). The picture she draws is of a market economy that will gladly welcome women on an equal footing if only they are suitably qualified.

A move to the demand side

Woolf did not return directly to the question of women's place in civilisation for almost a decade after *A Room of One's Own*, during which time the Great Depression of the 1930s threw into question whether any simple market reforms like giving women a level playing field on the supply side of the market through modest redistribution of income and wealth would do any good. And so she turned, rather tentatively to the demand side of the market where men were still firmly in control. Her progression of thought was remarkably parallel to that of her two close friends Roger Fry and John Maynard Keynes. Fry's lifelong policy concern was to identify the means within the market economy to support those artists whose products did not necessarily yield the utility upon which conventional consumer demand was based. Through the Omega Workshops, Fry explored ways by which private entrepreneurs and various forms of cooperative enterprise might give the artists a secure market location and demanders might be expected to make their purchases without further prompting. But after Omega was closed Fry's thinking changed dramatically as is evident in his study for the Hogarth Press entitled *Art and Commerce* (1926). There he turned away from the

supply side of the art market to the demand side where he constructed a complex taxonomy of human motives to understand how different segments of demand could be stimulated and manipulated through an understanding of the behaviour of these actors. Partly in jest, he labelled his categories of demanders: philistines, snobbists, classicists, aesthetes, the herd, the modern corporation, the aristocracy, the church and the state. Fry made use of psychology, anthropology and the ideas of the American Institutionalist Thorstein Veblen to construct his behavioural hypotheses. Some of Fry's ideas about the importance of a vigorous and reliable demand for the arts and how to achieve it were presented to a wider audience in Clive Bell's study *Civilisation*.

In an evolution similar to that of Fry, Keynes, concerned about the stability and growth of the national economy, began with a focus on the monetary system and a capital market dominated by rational actors saving and investing and using money to effect transactions. He moved then to a complex study of the psychological motives behind why market participants spent or held money, developing concepts of 'liquidity preference', the 'marginal efficiency of capital', and the 'consumption function'. He was especially concerned with how to respond when the aggregate demand for goods and services did not sustain the supply.

In *Three Guineas* (1938), published just two years after Keynes's *General Theory* and soon after she must have re-read *Art and Commerce* for her biography of Fry, Woolf too moved to the demand side of the market to understand the position of women in society. She had implied in *A Room of One's Own* that if women had sufficient resources and presented themselves to the market they would be welcomed and given equal status – in the professions and academic disciplines at least. But this did not happen. No matter how competent the women, the men who dominated the professions could still admit only those they wished. Perhaps the problem was the familiar one of monopoly. Men wish to stifle competition from women. She quoted approvingly an historian of the great universities who had observed that in the arts in the universities

> the spirit of monopolists is narrow, lazy, and oppressive; their work is more costly and less productive than that of independent artists; and the new improvements so eagerly grasped by the competition of freedom, are admitted with slow and sullen reluctance to those proud corporations, above the fear of a rival, and below the confession of an error. (*TG*, p. 273)

But rational monopoly seemed an inadequate explanation, and like Fry and Keynes she turned to 'that understanding of human beings and their motives which, if the word is rid of its scientific associations, might be called psychology' (*TG*, p. 13). Perhaps influenced by Thorstein Veblen who had been cited approvingly by Fry in *Art and Commerce*, she observed that social class and status had much to do with economic decisions, and these were signalled often by intangibles such as dress: 'It not only covers nakedness, gratifies vanity, and creates pleasure for the eye, but it serves to advertise the social, professional, or intellectual standing of the wearer' (*TG*, p. 38). Veblen had devoted chapter 7 of *The Theory of the Leisure Class* to 'Dress as an Expression of the Pecuniary Culture' (Veblen 1934 [1899]). Attire was especially important if one wished to be taken seriously on such matters as war and peace. Since military uniforms were forbidden to women, Woolf wrote, she could 'express the opinion that the wearer is not to us a pleasing or an impressive spectacle. He is on the contrary a ridiculous, a barbarous, a displeasing spectacle' (*TG*, pp. 39–40).

Virginia Woolf discovered by 1938 that, whether competitive or monopolistic, the labour markets through which women must find their way were more complex than simply the reconciliation of the forces of supply and demand derived from utility, productivity, and cost. There was something that might be called 'Odour then – or shall we call it "atmosphere"?' something that economists might call market failure (*TG*, p. 95). Therefore, for women to take their rightful place in the economy and society, and thereby gain access to civilisation and have their views on such weighty subjects as peace and war taken seriously, it was necessary for them to have not only independent income and a room of their own but also 'a mind of their own and a will of their own' (*TG*, p. 106). This required a sophisticated understanding of 'atmosphere', which required careful study of the men who generated it.

Woolf by this time had completely abandoned the simple rational actor model of the economy and was looking for guidance elsewhere. She had reached the point where Keynes was in the *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* and Fry was in *Art and Commerce*. Like both men she reflected on the pecuniary motive of Veblen (*TG*, p. 123) and the 'sex instinct' and 'infantile fixation' of Freud (*TG*, p. 194; p. 228). She found inspiration even, as had Adam Smith, in Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees* (*TG*, p. 284). In her repeated emphasis on the corrupting effect of social 'ceremony' one wonders if she was influenced by the American Institutionalist economist Clarence Ayres, a disciple of Veblen, with whom the term 'ceremony' is closely associated (Breit and Culbertson, 1976, pp. 13–15);

she may have read Ayres's articles when he was associate editor of the *New Republic* in the 1920s while she was publishing there. She insisted, for example 'Let us never cease from thinking – what is this "civilisation" in which we find ourselves? What are these ceremonies and why should we take part in them?' (*TG*, p. 114)

Woolf argued that if women were simply brought into the existing economic and social system they would be co-opted into a flawed system: 'Are we not right then in thinking that if we enter the same professions we shall acquire the same qualities?' (*TG*, p. 121). She worried also that the alternatives to the patriarchal home and the patriarchal professions in the public sector might involve a choice among evils:

> Behind us lies the patriarchal system; the private house with its nullity, its immorality, its hypocrisy, its servility. Before us lies the public world, the professional system, with its possessiveness, its jealousy, its pugnacity, its greed. The one shuts us up like slaves in a harem; the other forces us to circle, like caterpillars head to tail, round and round the mulberry tree, the sacred tree, of property. It is a choice of evils. Each is bad. (*TG*, p. 135)

Having found little enlightenment in the formal literature of psychology about this problem of how to civilise the patriarchs Woolf followed other Bloomsberries, notably Lytton Strachey and Keynes, to biography, case studies in psychology as it were. She wrote: 'The question we put to you, lives of the dead, is how we can enter the professions and yet remain civilized human beings; human beings, that is, who wish to prevent war?' (*TG*, p. 136). The message she received from biography was that the answer lay in education and broad social change:

> If you refuse to be separated from the four great teachers of the daughters of educated men – poverty, chastity, derision and freedom from unreal loyalties – but combine them with some wealth, some knowledge, and some service to real loyalties then you can enter the professions and escape the risks that make them undesirable. (*TG*, p. 144–5)

The 'unreal loyalties' from which it was essential to remain free were 'pride of nationality in the first place; also of religious pride, college pride, school pride, family pride, sex pride' (*TG*, p. 146). The inspiration for this injunction may have been a mock sermon by Roger Fry only four years before on the text 'Pride Goeth before Destruction, and an Haughty Spirit before a Fall' (Fry, 1934).

Finally, as an alternative to the rational actor model of human behaviour Woolf turned for enlightenment, as did Forster with his concern for the environment, to the Greek classics:

> Consider the character of Creon. There you have a most profound analysis by a poet, who is a psychologist in action, of the effect of power and wealth upon the soul. Consider Creon's claim to absolute rule over his subjects. That is a far more instructive analysis of tyranny than any our politicians can offer us. (*TG*, p. 148)

Creon attended to the corrupting effects of power and wealth as well as to their contributions to utility.

When Woolf addressed the danger she perceived that art and culture, and the achievement of civilisation and the imaginative life by women, would inevitably be impeded in a male-dominated society, she took an approach very similar to that of Fry in *Art and Commerce*. Fry had claimed that there was genuine art, and then there was ersatz art that he called 'opifacts'. What Fry called 'opifacture', Woolf called 'adultery of the brain' (*TG*, p. 170). Fry speculated about various market reforms that might be instituted to discourage artists from producing mere opifacts when they could produce real art, for example institutions to encourage painters such as John Singer Sargent to produce more landscapes and fewer society portraits. With the same intention with respect to literature Woolf insisted that writers avoid all

> adulterated forms of culture. We must ask you to objure them; not to appear on public platforms; not to lecture; not to allow your private face to be published, or details of your private life; not to avail yourself, in short, of any of the forms of brain prostitution which are so insidiously suggested by the pimps and panders of the brain-selling trade; or to accept any of those baubles and labels by which the brain merit is advertised and certified – medals, honours, degrees – we must ask you to refuse them absolutely, since they are all tokens that culture has been prostituted and intellectual liberty sold into captivity. (*TG*, p. 171)

The artist must labour not for fame but for the pure joy of creating art: 'We must extinguish the coarse glare of advertisement and publicity, not merely because the limelight is apt to be held in incompetent hands, but because of the psychological effect of such illumination upon those who receive it' (*TG*, p. 208). In this insistence on anonymity as a means

of preserving artistic integrity Woolf must have remembered the rule at Fry's Omega Workshops that all products be unsigned.

The question arose for Woolf, familiar to every think tank before and since: how are the intellectuals with answers to policy problems to reach the wider public with them? The answer Woolf gave was a reflection of the credo of the Bloomsbury public intellectual:

> The public [. . .] is very like ourselves; it lives in rooms; it walks in streets, and is said moreover to be tired of sausage. Fling leaflets down basements; expose them on stalls; trundle them along streets on barrows to be sold for a penny or given away. Find out new ways of approaching 'the public'; single it into separate people instead of massing it into one monster, gross in body, feeble in mind. (*TG*, p. 178)

It can hardly be a coincidence that Woolf's strategy for dissemination of ideas was so close to that of Keynes who had written in *Essays in Biography* (1933) only five years before: 'Economists must leave to Adam Smith alone the glory of the quarto, must pluck the day, fling pamphlets into the wind, write always sub specie temporis, and achieve immortality by accident, if at all' (Keynes, 1972, p. 199).

In order to protect those women who were enabled to achieve civilisation and escape the corruption and intellectual prostitution of the market, Virginia Woolf went back to Plato (a well-established source of wisdom among members of the Bloomsbury Group) for a utopian solution and suggested that they isolate themselves as a distinct community somewhat like the Philosopher Kings: 'If name it must have, it could be called the Outsiders' Society. That is not a resonant name, but it has the advantage that it squares with facts – the facts of history, of law, or biography; even it may be, with the still hidden facts of our still unknown psychology' (*TG*, p. 193). Members would commit themselves to do what Fry had asked of artists in a sea of opificers: 'they would bind themselves not to continue to make money in any profession, but to cease all competition and to practise their profession experimentally, in the interests of research and for love of the work itself, when they had earned enough to live upon' (*TG*, p. 204). Fry had counted upon manipulation of the demand side of the market to save the artist from corruption; Woolf went further and called for a commitment from the supply side as well. Artists by foreswearing economic blandishments would be given 'that freedom from unreal loyalties, that freedom from interested motives' (*TG*, pp. 205–6). At the same time she remained true to the Bloomsbury position of avoiding

government assistance except as a last resort; her Society members would 'experiment not with public means in public but with private means in private' (*TG*, p. 206).

A plan of action

What then were the mature policy conclusions reached by Virginia Woolf about the issue that concerned her, how to enable women in greater numbers to achieve civilisation and the imaginative life of the arts and literature? She respected her roots in Quaker religion and the Clapham Sect and she accepted responsibility as an enlightened woman with a privileged upbringing (the 'daughter of an educated man') in a country with a thin veneer of civilisation to reach out both to artists and writers as well as to 'the common reader' and 'the common seer' (*RF*, p. 105). She applauded Rogers Fry's commitment to work with the producers of artistic goods so that they might become at the same time true intellectuals: 'The young English artist tended to become illiterate, narrow-minded and self-centred with disastrous effects upon his work, failing any society where, among the amenities of civilisation, ideas were discussed in common, and he was accepted as an equal' (*RF*, p. 184). In effect, every artist needed a Bloomsbury Group, and means should be found to provide it.

Virginia Woolf was conflicted about just how much intervention the intelligentsia should undertake with the wider population, but she was persuaded that the arts were sufficiently important that they justified an exception to the Bloomsbury concern about engagement with a strong government discussed above. Indeed, 'civilisation' seemed the only way to keep the individual truly free in modern society. She quoted Roger Fry in her biography thus:

> I'm gradually getting hold of a new idea about the real meaning of civilisation, or what it ought to mean. It's apropos of the question of the existence of individuals. It seems to me that nearly the whole Anglo-Saxon race especially of course in America have lost the power to be individuals. They have become social insects like bees and ants. They are just lost to humanity, and the great question for the future is whether that will spread or be repulsed by the people who still exist, mostly the people round the Mediterranean. [. . .] It's the question of whether people are allowed a clear space round them or whether society impinges on that and squeezes them all into hexagons like a honeycomb. (*RF*, p. 272)

She wrote approvingly of Fry's description of the position of the painter G. F. Watts on this question of how to sustain the individual, suggesting that it represented her own: 'he [Watts] looked upon art as a necessary and culminating function of civilised life – as indeed the great refining and disinterested activity, without which modern civilisation would become a luxurious barbarity' (*RF*, p. 115). Looking back while writing Fry's biography in the late 1930s she seemed to agree with Fry that in the years before World War I significant progress had been made in extending the arts far and wide. Woolf wrote: 'Civilisation, a desire for the things of the spirit, seemed to be taking hold not merely of a small group, but to be breaking through among the poor, among the rich. [. . .] "We are at last," he summed it up, "becoming a little civilised." And then of course the war came' (*RF*, p. 199).

Woolf proposed that those like herself from the comfortable middle-class, should not attempt to achieve civilisation by patronising and pretending to join the masses:

> they can work much more effectively by remaining in their own class and using the methods of that class to improve a class which stands much in need of improvement. If on the other hand the educated (as so often happens) renounce the very qualities which education should have brought – reason, tolerance, knowledge – and play at belonging to the working class and adopting its cause, they merely expose that cause to the ridicule of the educated class, and do nothing to improve their own. (*TG*, p. 312)

But it was not only the working-class that needed help. She pitied also the middle-class Philistines of Surrey who protested the modern architecture of Roger Fry's house *Durbins*: 'How much they missed – how little they allowed themselves to enjoy life. It was the English passion for morality, he [Fry] supposed, and also the English climate' (*RF*, p. 164). Maybe this class too could be helped to achieve civilisation, but it would not be easy.

Virginia Woolf did not leave behind a specific set of proposals for action that would enable women to experience civilisation more easily and in greater numbers. Instead she left it for those who would follow to construct such a strategy. But in this too she was very like her Bloomsbury colleagues. The disciples of John Maynard Keynes remain puzzled to this day about what policies he wished them to put in place. Roger Fry's disciple Kenneth Clark reflected Fry's thinking in a whole range of actions he took over his lifetime, and he experimented widely,

from formation of the Arts Council of Great Britain to the television series and book entitled *Civilisation* that reached a larger audience for the arts than any other before or since. Forster is remembered as a pioneer of environmental awareness in Britain, but he did not bequeath very much of an agenda for action. In her concluding work on her own policy issue Virginia Woolf's approach remained that of her Bloomsbury friends. Indeed it may be that her work cannot be fully understood without taking this into account.

Conclusion

The claims made in this paper are small ones, first that the Bloomsbury Group mainly unconsciously developed a three-stage strategy to approach problems that concerned them. In the first stage, the problems were raised and examined from different angles; in this the novelists had a large role by framing the questions and throwing out for reflection and discussion problems and possible solutions that were in the air. In the second stage, answers were posed that typically involved rather moderate reforms, and only in the third stage, when moderation seemed not to be working, did the analysis and reforms become innovative and radical. A prevailing concern in most of the policy discussion is with the economic aspects of the problems, not from any single doctrinal position but rather from the general prospect that critical issues are embedded deeply in the economy. The main leaders in developing, perfecting and implementing this analytical strategy in Bloomsbury were Virginia Woolf's close friends John Maynard Keynes, Roger Fry, and E. M. Forster, but in her work we can see this strategy clearly in place as well.

Notes

1. For example, Leon Edel, *Bloomsbury*: *A House of Lions*.
2. For example, David Gadd, *The Loving Friends*: *A Portrait of Bloomsbury*.
3. See E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India* and *The Collected Tales of E. M. Forster*.
4 See David Garnett, *Lady into Fox* and *The Sailor's Return*.
5. See Roger Fry, *Art and Commerce*.
6. See Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas*.
7. See Craufurdt, *Art and the Market*: *Roger Fry on Commerce in Art*, pp. 178–93.
8. See David Garnett, *Lady into Fox* and *The Sailor's Return*.

6

Unpinning Economies of Desire: Gifts and the Market in "Moments of Being: 'Slater's Pins Have no Points'"

Kathryn Simpson

In 1925 Virginia Woolf's contemporary, Marcel Mauss, published his ground-breaking ethnographic study, *The Gift* (*Essai Sur Le Don*),[1] in which he analyses the central significance of exchange practices to the social organisation and meaning of a culture with a focus on several non-Western cultures and also ancient European ones. As European societies struggled to recover, socially, politically, emotionally and economically from the First World War, debate about ways of managing the economy and criticism of existing economic systems came to the fore notably, in Britain, where issues of economic adjustment were 'perhaps more prominent than most' (Aldcroft, 1983, p. 2) and more specifically in the Bloomsbury circle with the radical economic ideas of John Maynard Keynes, advocate of deficit spending and credit for the consumer to boost the economy.[2] Mauss draws on the studies of several prominent ethnographers and the key tenets of his study is that gifts are never freely given, and social bonds are formed and consolidated, and cultural continuity ensured, by the obligation to reciprocate. Gifts exchanged are also never simply material, but inherently spiritual, even magical, imbued as they are with the identity or the soul of the donor – an idea most clearly encapsulated in his understanding of the *hau* of Maori exchange systems. Using his theory of gift economies, Mauss casts a new and critical light on the increasingly commodified, impersonal and anonymous nature of Western culture, a culture impoverished by capitalist values and practices: 'the mere skimpy life that it is given through the daily wages doled out by employers' (Mauss, 1990, p. 69).

However, whilst Mauss clearly draws distinctions between gift and monetary/ capitalist economies, he also looks hopefully for traces of a gift economy remaining in Western European society of the time, perceiving gift practices and 'the morality of former times' (Mauss, 1990, p. 65)

in individual, group and state activities and legislative changes.[3] Not only this, but he traces vestiges of gift economies in the pre-history of European cultures, examining Indo-European legal systems, for example, as a source of evidence for this. As James Carrier points out, the broader interest of Mauss' study is not restricted to exchange practices and how these are understood, but is concerned with what this reveals about people's perception of things and people (Carrier, 1995, p. 9). He is interested in the ways that social, economic and psycho-organic elements of experience and identity interconnect in a dynamic way (Gofman, 1998, p. 66; Karsenti, 1998, p. 79).[4] His aim is not that his study will act 'as a model to be followed', nor that the exchange practices he examines will be seen as fixed and static, but that his work will provoke further questions and explorations (Mauss, 1990, p. 78; pp. 79–80). He suggests that understanding and participating in gift economies can 'throw light upon our morality and help to direct our ideals' and can offer a different perspective on social structures and the organisation of Western culture (Mauss, 1990, p. 71). Here I want to explore some of the ways that Mauss' ideas about the gift can help to illuminate the dynamic interconnection of the social, the economic and representations of desire in Woolf's fiction, and how it can throw new light on the social critique her work offers.

Although Woolf may not have known of Mauss' work specifically, the general interest in the 'primitive' in modernist circles is clearly an influence in her writing. She would also have been aware of developments in anthropology and the newly emerging area of ethnography through her connection with Cambridge academics, notably her friendship with Jane Harrison, a classical scholar whose radically new interpretations and theories of ancient Greek art and culture were informed by anthropological and ethnographic studies. Harrison was herself influenced by the theories of Emile Durkheim (Mauss' uncle) and Sandra J. Peacock notes her praise of work co-written by Durkheim and Mauss, and by Henri Hubert and Mauss in the 1890s (Peacock, 1988, p. 181). Other influences on Harrison and Woolf include George Frazer's work, especially *The Golden Bough*, and as Meg Albrink notes, Woolf's 'connections within the Bloomsbury Group would have introduced her to the innovations of the Cambridge School of modern ethnographers, a group that included Malinowski, W. H. R. Rivers, and Alfred Cort Haddon' (Albrink, 2006, p. 197). Malinowski is one of the ethnographers whose work Mauss engages with most fully in *The Gift*.

Throughout much of her work, Woolf expresses concerns similar to those of Mauss with the all-pervasive ethos of capitalism and her writing

also explores the ways in which a gift economy can operate in part as an alternative to capitalist exchange,[5] by privileging generosity, social bonds and intimacies, and rendering unimportant the purely monetary value of the objects exchanged. Her representation of the gift economy is more spontaneous, pleasurable and risky than the seemingly orderly threefold practice of giving, receiving and reciprocating in an on-going circulation of exchange identified by Mauss (the apparent certainty of which others have criticised).[6] It is also crucially complicated by her central concerns with issues of gender and sexuality, and Woolf's questioning of capitalist paradigms, unlike Mauss' challenges, is bound up with her resistance to the heterosexual and patriarchal norms and values capitalism seems to reinforce.

As with aspects of Mauss' understanding of a present-day gift economy in which commodity and gift economies co-exist,[7] gift economies in Woolf's work are also represented in relation to the market. What we find in Woolf's writing is not a simple opposition of market and gift economies whereby the gift represents a kind of utopia beyond the market. Expressions of generosity and the literal giving of gifts do work to undermine capitalism's acquisitive ethos and the fixing of value, but they take place within a capitalist society and so subvert this economic system from within. This does not mean that the gift is subsumed in the dominant paradigm of capitalist exchange so that it becomes an impossibility or simply a 'fiction',[8] but rather the profound ambiguity of the gift (in terms of motivation, its effect on the relationship between the participants and its value in every sense[9]) has a disruptive effect, suggestively sidestepping the calculation of market exchange. Further, in an increasingly impersonal and rigid economy especially in the 1920s with the British Government stalwartly adhering to a policy of fiscal and monetary retrenchment in an attempt to return to the stability of the gold standard, (Aldcroft, 1986, p. 6), the need to counter the impersonality of a commodity society through the exchange of personal gifts becomes more urgent (Carrier, 1995, p. 11).

Woolf's focus on the experience of women in a male-dominated capitalist society and the specific risk to women in a gift economy (where there is also the danger of colluding with heteropatriarchal power structures that identify woman *as* a gift to be exchanged between men)[10] complicate the negotiation of both capitalist and gift economies. Equally, such negotiations also open up many subversive possibilities. Hélène Cixous' conception of the gift economy as feminine, disruptive and resistant to the commodifying impulse of capitalism is useful in exploring the various significances of the gift in Woolf's writing.[11] For Cixous

the gift economy privileges fluidity, indeterminacy, a destabilisation of hierarchies and rational systems, bringing about a disturbance of property rights. It doesn't try to recover its expenses or to recuperate its losses – in fact giving, excess and overflow are recognised as sources of pleasure and *jouissance*. "Moments of Being: 'Slater's Pins Have no Points'" is a story about the awakening to new sexual self-knowledge, but also to the inevitable economic implications of being at odds with and resistant to the dominant script of heterosexuality. Reading the interconnections of market and gift economies in relation to Woolf's story, it is possible to see how a resistance to sexual and economic conventions can help to realise a different economy of desire for women. Displacing the emphasis from the possession of commodities to the giving and dispersal of the pleasures commodities can signify and embody, the gift economy in Woolf's story works to generate homoerotic possibility and, potentially, facilitate the satisfaction of women's more subversive desires. Woolf's story also represents the giving of non-material gifts, such as the gift of music played to 'reward' and to charm, the giving of compliments, the sharing of a moment of ecstasy, and a kiss.

Women, markets and gifts

As several other critics have demonstrated, Woolf's attitude to the market and commodity culture is contradictory and ambivalent. Existing critiques elucidate Woolf's complex and contradictory engagement with market economies and relate this to the sexual and class politics of her writing, to her own practice of publication, to her personal attitude to the commercial world, and to her sense of herself as a modernist writer.[12] As co-owner of the Hogarth Press and as a woman writer intent on making money from her pen, Woolf was interested in markets and profit margins. Several critics have considered the various ways in which the Woolfs' ownership of the press influenced Woolf's career. It is often seen as being an escape from the taint of the marketplace and from some of the pressures of publication. Laura Marcus, for instance, suggests that it provides a buffer between Woolf and the market, and as such formed a liminal space in which Woolf could feel more at ease to work (L. Marcus, 1996, p. 144), and Michael Tratner suggests it seemed to provide an alternative to capitalist enterprise (Tratner, 1995, p. 132). Similarly, Jane Garrity argues that co-ownership of the Hogarth Press allowed Woolf 'to perceive herself as separate from the marketplace', yet Woolf was 'deeply immersed in issues of literary circulation and capital' (Garrity, 2000, p. 197). Woolf herself discusses the Press in terms of enabling her to be

herself, to write what she wants (*D*2, p. 107), but also by the mid-1920s the Press 'becomes a serious business' (*D*2, p. 307). Sales figures feature significantly in her *Diaries*, as both a marker of her artistic achievement and an indication of her financial success. Clearly, profits from her work enabled her to gain greater financial independence, to have purchasing power, and to experience the pleasure of commodity culture.

However, she was also highly ambivalent about her own role in the commercial world and, as a feminist, she was well aware of the positive and potentially dangerous impact of the all-pervasive capitalist forces and commodity culture on women's social, psychic and emotional experience.[13] Based on the possession of things, money and people, male-dominated capitalism is a rational system fixated on calculation, intent on maintaining clear boundaries and distinctions (between buyer and seller), and rigorously organised by the laws of profit and loss. As Tratner argues, Woolf (along with Joyce, Eliot, and Yeats) is critical of hegemonic capitalism and the limitations it imposes. He argues that capitalism hides and represses certain aspects of the social order, silences and denies certain groups of people perceived to be at odds with dominant cultural norms, and represses elements of the psyche which Woolf (and other modernists) sought to release (Tratner, 1995, p. 11). In *Three Guineas* Woolf sums up middle-class women's engagement with capitalist economies as being caught 'between the devil and the deep sea' (*TG*, p. 135) – she knew the positive difference that earning a 'bright new sixpence' could make, but was crucially aware of the dangers of women being complicit with male-dominated economic systems that threaten to disempower, objectify and even commodify women.[14]

However, Woolf is also aware of the ways that commodity culture can stimulate and mobilise a profusion of desires in the consumer, as it fuels fantasy and excites imagination. The exhilarating proliferation of commodities in such an economy not only engenders new desires for objects and experiences, but simultaneously creates spaces and opportunities for potentially subversive libidinal desires to surface. In this way, capitalist commodity culture can be seen to elicit desires that it cannot contain, control or satisfy with commodities, desires which can endanger the hierarchies and heteropatriarchal social order capitalism seems to keep in place. The gift economy at work in Woolf's writing, and especially in this particular story, offers an outlet for such desires, needs and appetites, and signals the release of libidinal longings in excess of the rigid structures of capitalist exchange and heterosexual norms.

Gifts are also bound up with relations of power, not only in terms of the rivalry and displays of power involved in the potlatch ceremonies that

Mauss discusses (in which objects are destroyed and sacrificed to the gods and the dead in an excessive display of wealth and power), but in the obligation to reciprocate which is a fundamental aspect of Mauss' theory. Whilst in Cixous' theory such reciprocation is troubling – for her this is 'the paradox of the gift that takes', a gift given with the hope of return, or a gift whose value is 'annulled' by a 'countergift' (Cixous, 1975, p. 263; Conley, 1991, p. 158) – the obligation to reciprocate a gift is what cements the social bond in Mauss' theory. This obligation is linked in Mauss' work with the Maori concept of the *hau*, a concept others argue he mistakenly interprets as the spirit of the thing exchanged which actively demands to be returned to its original donor, since '[t]o retain that thing would be dangerous and mortal, not only because it would be against law and morality, but also because that thing com[es] from the person not only morally, but physically and spiritually' (Mauss, 1990, p. 12). Osteen outlines the objections of other critics of Mauss, but importantly concludes that 'it is the givers and receivers who imbue objects with the personality of the original giver and who therefore perceive some spirit within objects that preserves the imprint of the original owner' (Osteen, 2002, p. 4). It is this idea of the gift that has such significance in Woolf's story.

Whilst Woolf's representation and personal experience of receiving and giving gifts recognises the power and potential danger of the gift – the way it can both empower and be used to wield power over the recipient through obligation[15] – the gift in her writing can also precipitate a transformation which is not undone by a return gift as Cixous' criticism of the obligation to give a return gift would suggest. Rather, as in the gift economies Mauss discusses, bonds are intensified and sustained by an on-going connection, by the momentum of a circulation of gifts and by the uniqueness of the moment of giving and receiving. Woolf's representation of a gift economy also maintains the ambivalence at the heart of Mauss' theory: the gift is both interested and disinterested, effecting the consolidation of interpersonal bonds and exerting power; the gift means more than one thing and, as Osteen remarks, this can 'expose the limitations of our categories', testing and transgressing boundaries, ideological, social and sexual (Osteen, 2002, p. 16). This ambivalence of motive for giving is problematic but also productive, as Woolf's famous gift of the original manuscript of *Orlando* to Vita Sackville-West exemplifies.[16] The importance of gifts of stories, and the pleasures and dangers of interacting imaginatively with others by creating stories about them, is foregrounded in "Moments of Being: 'Slater's Pins Have no Points'", but so too are the risks, and 'the aleatory and ludic qualities that make the [gift-giving] game worth playing' (Osteen, 2002, p. 25).

The formal ambiguity, suggestiveness and indeterminacy of Woolf's story can also be read as textually generous, giving rise to a wealth of potential meanings, and inviting a generosity from the reader who must participate, investing time, imagination, emotion and intellect in order to explore the many 'points' of this story. Such generosity also puts this story at odds with the dominant processes of commodification since it is not a closed and finished product with a specific meaning and literary value for ready consumption. As usual Woolf seems to have in mind a reader-accomplice who will generously participate in the creative and on-going process of making meanings so that ideas and possibilities remain in circulation.

"Moments of Being: 'Slater's Pins Have No Points'"

Clare Hanson suggests that short fiction can act as 'a vehicle for different *kinds* of knowledge, knowledge which may be in some way at odds with the "story" of dominant culture', and this is the case with this story (Hanson, 1989, p. 6). The main 'action' revolves around finding the pin which fails to secure Fanny Wilmot's flower to her dress during her music lesson with her spinster teacher, Julia Craye. Julia's comment on the poor quality of pins from Slater's sets in motion Fanny's train of thoughts, recollections and speculations about Julia's past which, along with Julia's actions, lead Fanny to a serious re-evaluation of her teacher. Fanny finally finds her pin and Julia returns her flower with an embrace and a kiss – a powerful moment of revelation for Fanny. Seeing and experiencing Julia's passion has such an impact that Fanny re-pins her flower with 'trembling fingers' (*CSF*, p. 220). The final section of the story is the most explicit in terms of articulating homoerotic desire, but I want to suggest that a focus on economies can also generate a sense of homoerotic possibility in this story which goes beyond this important but isolated moment.

The beginning of the story foregrounds commodities and their acquisition, but also attests to an apparent disappointment with mass-produced objects. The inferior quality of such commodities (the faulty pin which causes Fanny's flower to fall) interrupts Julia's playing of Bach and so intrudes on both the rarefied atmosphere created by high art, and also on the intimacy between these women. However, the engagement with the commercial world in Woolf's writing is more complicated and ambivalent than such an oppositional reading would suggest. The title of the story makes us aware that there is an intimate connection between the moment of being of homoerotic realisation and the

impersonal, transferable commodity of a pin. Indeed, the functional failure of the pin literally and metaphorically 'unpins' and opens up the subversive potential of this otherwise conventional and acceptable teacher–pupil scenario. The bonds between the women in this story seem, then, in Cixous' words, to 'function otherwise', to resist 'the realm of the proper' and the sense of being 'property' in a way that can destabilise market and heterosexual economies (Cixous, 1981, p. 50).

Janet Winston discusses this story in the light of 'homoerotically imbued mentoring relations' (Winston, 1997, p. 61), and locates it in a tradition of Sapphic models of narrative that revolve around teacher–pupil or pupil–pupil seduction. This story is undoubtedly one in which Fanny Wilmot learns something new and gains a surprisingly, even shockingly, new insight into the female body as she has her eyes opened to the homoeroticism of her music teacher and to her own lesbian desires. However, there is also an economic lesson at the heart of this story, a lesson that makes clear the close connection between financial security and sexuality. The context for this story in which Julia Craye and her pupil Fanny Wilmot come to know one another is created by the business arrangement of 'buying' and 'selling' music lessons. However, although this relationship is premised on a monetary exchange, the interaction of Julia and Fanny exceeds this circuit of exchange with generosity on both sides, and the lessons about desire and sexual choices that Fanny learns are inextricably bound up with both market and gift economies.

In particular, what is made explicit to Fanny is the economic risk of pursuing her homoerotic desires, and the consequences of refusing to conform to heterosexual imperatives in a patriarchal and capitalist society in which women are seen as objects of exchange in transactions between men. As Patricia Juliana Smith argues,

> what is at stake for a woman under such conditions is nothing less than economic survival, as the object of exchange is inevitably dependent on the exchanger for her continued perceived worth; [. . .] for a 'commodity' [. . .] to lack exchange value is tantamount to meaninglessness. (Smith, 1997, p. 6)

For many characters (and authors) this gives rise to what Smith calls 'lesbian panic',[17] and this may be what makes Fanny's hands tremble at the end, but this is not the outcome for Julia in this story (Smith, 1997, p. 2). Rather, Julia Craye is more than happy to take the risk and live a frugal life, 'counting the cost and measuring out of her tight shut purse

the sum needed for this journey, or for that old mirror' (*CSF*, p. 220). Although her 'tight shut purse' seems to refer to both the economic constraint she experiences and her sexually closeted position, it is immediately made clear that such frugality also ironically signals her resistance to self-denial: she preserves the right to do what she likes and is obstinate in 'choosing her pleasures for herself', and indeed in sharing them with other women (*CSF*, p. 220). Fanny twice mentions one specific pleasure, to have breakfast in bed, which would have been interrupted had Julia married – an indication of both Fanny's concern with Julia's 'odd' behaviour and her 'appetites' in bed (*CSF*, p. 219). It is also clear that what is valuable to Julia is not material possessions, but rather experiences and memories: she strings her 'memorable days' like precious gems on a necklace, recalling their uniqueness with sensuous (even sexual) satisfaction, 'finger[ing], [. . .] feel[ing], [. . .] savour[ing], sighing' over their 'qualit[ies]' – not counting their value with avaricious calculation (*CSF*, p. 219).

Although we are told that Julia has been 'left badly off' after her brother's death (*CSF*, p. 215), her acceptance of a more frugal but independent life seems also to assert her freedom from the constraints of her previous living arrangement with her brother and from the restrictions consequent on his reputation and his own closeted queerness. Susan Clements suggests that the objects of Julius's collection, the 'Roman glasses, vases, urns [. . .] can stand imagistically for Miss Craye's sexuality without forcing Fanny to confront, on a conscious level, the teacher's desire', and this, as with other aspects of the story, Clements argues, points to Fanny's denial or wilful misrecognition of Julia's lesbian desires and her own (Clements, 1994, p. 19). Equally, it renders Julia untouchable, her sexuality frozen, and her desires out of circulation or exchange, suggesting that Julia is also a possession in Julius's collection.[18] As the similarity of their names suggests, her identity is subsumed in his (she is apparently his property, as a wife would be). Her opening gambit, then, can be read as her indication to Fanny that she has stepped beyond the constraints of her brother's collection, and the attitudes, assumptions and values this represents, by demonstrating her involvement in the everyday commercial world. This effects a destabilisation of hierarchies of value that would privilege the male collector and auratic objects over the female shopper and mass-produced goods, a destabilisation which opens up other possibilities for disturbance of conventional assumptions and property rights.[19] Unlike the auratic objects of Julius's collection alongside which Julia is seemingly fixed, encased, even embalmed, in a closed, sterile, and lifeless space, the

shoddy mass-produced pins unfix her, release her homoerotic desires, and act as an 'opening' to new relationships and, simultaneously, a new perspective on the world. Fanny is right in thinking that Julia 'wanted to break the spell that had fallen on the house; to break the pane of glass which separated them from other people' – Julia desires to be in touch with life and the real world, and to be closer to Fanny (*CSF*, p. 216).

However, Woolf's story does not wholly endorse the commercial world at the expense of the high cultural activities of archaeology and collecting. Although Julia indicates her refusal to be an object of exchange in a heterosexual economy by asserting her right to be an agent of exchange in her role as shopper, commodity culture is far from satisfactory or satisfying. Julia is not duped or 'seduced by the glittering phantasmagoria of an emerging consumer culture' (Felski, 1995, p. 62) and far from being the passive female consumer that male-driven marketing strategies assume and create, Julia is not drawn into the temptations of commodity culture and so does not capitulate to the desires it stirs, which can also keep women in a state of financial dependency on men, needing more money than they can earn to satisfy such desires, and so needing to charm and allure men. Her desire 'to break the pane of glass' could equally be to break a shop window whose display of commodities for sale could both fascinate and entrap. Indeed, I would argue that Julia, like Woolf herself, uses the market economy to facilitate the articulation of her desires: as Fanny suspects, Julia's comment about Slater's pins seems to be made 'at a venture', as a means of forging a more intimate connection with Fanny through the sense of shared experience (*CSF*, p. 216).[20]

It is this sense of shared intimacy between women which most differentiates the business arrangement in which Julia and Fanny are engaged from the impersonal world of collecting and retail marketing associated with men. In contrast to the detached and untouchable collection and the impersonal experience of retail, the story sets up a space of female intimacy from which men are effectively excluded (Julius is dead and Slater's phallic pins are proven to be pointless) and in which a feminine libidinal economy is privileged. This economy is premised on the generosity and risk taking involved in the giving of a variety of gifts and the story focuses on the power, centrality and passionate possibility of a homoerotically infused gift economy shared by women. Indeed, at the heart of this 'business' is the personal connection between Julia and Polly Kingston, the spinster principal of the music school, and we're told that Julia teaches only 'as a special favour' to Polly, 'who had "the greatest admiration for her [Julia] in every way"' (*CSF*, p. 215). Polly

seems to wish to ameliorate the economic and emotional dangers of resistance to dominant sexual norms, and to counter what Mauss calls the 'cold calculating mentality' of market exchange, her generosity supplementing the harsh and sterile economic system, 'the skimpy life' of wages earned in a capitalist system (Mauss, 1990, pp. 47–8; p. 69). Her stories are also imaginative gifts and similarly enrich the impersonal practicalities of economic transactions (as I will discuss later).

The gifts given in this story also suggest the giving of pleasure and a lesbian seduction and in this sense Julia's role as an agent of gift exchange has a more subversive effect than her role as shopper. Her agency serves to disrupt the market economy and trade because it threatens to undermine the notion of a fixed hierarchy and certain measurement of value, and because gifts she gives defy the regulatory system of profit and loss. Further, the exchange of gifts between women also scuppers the heterosexual economy in which women are the gifts exchanged between men, not the givers or the receivers. In gift exchange between women, then, women are agents ('exchange partners' and 'sexual subjects')[21] with the power to negotiate their own pleasures and to give pleasures to other women. Julia plays Bach as a gift to Fanny her favourite pupil, and this music fills Fanny's ears and fully engages her senses. For Emerson such a gift of one's talent is a true 'token[s] of compliment and love,' it is '[t]he only gift ... a portion of thyself' (Emerson, 1997, p. 25) and this musical gift serves to create an atmosphere of intimacy and to charm Fanny. It also sets the gift economy in motion and Fanny's response is to reciprocate. Indeed, it could be that dropping her pin at Julia's feet acts as a pledge, as Mauss' discussion of the importance of the pledge in Germanic law and gift practices suggests. Mauss explains that a pledge makes the interaction between the two parties possible, because each 'possesses something of the other' (Mauss, 1990, p. 61), and the thing itself ('generally of little value' but also 'normally [. . .] personal') 'is a bond by virtue of its own power' (Mauss, 1990, pp. 61–2). Such pledges are also wagers, challenges and dares which 'hold[s] danger for both parties' (Mauss, 1990, p. 62), and are usually thrown at the recipient's feet. In Mauss' contemporary France, pins are the objects given as such pledges (Mauss, 1990, pp. 61–2). Fanny's pin, dropped at Julia's feet, then, may be her promise to reciprocate Julia's gift of playing Bach for her, and also the dare that prompts Julia's 'venture' about Slater's pins.

The stories in this story also function as gifts, stimulating the imagination and fuelling desires, and, importantly, exceeding simple commercial exchange. Polly relates tales of her tomboy days as she accepts

payment for the music lessons and she gives 'little character sketches' which are not only in excess of the monetary exchange taking place, and which contrast significantly with the practical and direct exchange of 'cheques' for 'receipts', but which engender other stories in Fanny's mind and keep this gift in circulation (*CSF*, p. 215). Importantly, it is Polly's 'indescribable tone' used in the sketch of Julius Craye from which Fanny infers 'something odd, something queer' about him, and this fires Fanny's speculations about Julia (*CSF*, p. 216). Although this 'something' remains elusive for most of the story, a phrase that appears in the version of the story published in *A Haunted House*, but not in the version published in *Forum*, significantly belies Fanny's feeling.[22] The hint of there being 'something odd about Julius Craye' (in both versions) is prefaced with 'it was a seductive thought' in *A Haunted House* (*HH*, p. 105).

Rather than evading acknowledgement of Julia's lesbian sexuality and misrecognising her own lesbian desires (as Clements's reading of this story suggests), Fanny's attempted 'readings' of Julia via her stories about Julia's past and her evasion of marriage reveal Fanny's attraction to her tutor. If the gift economy is energised and fuelled by love and generosity, and by a willingness to imagine and speculate, Fanny's stories of thwarted heterosexual romance, for which she can think of almost endless variations, can also be read as a kind of gift.[23] Indeed, in her discussion of this story and Katherine Mansfield's "Carnation", Janet Winston argues that 'the act of reading becomes the site of narrative tension where the politics of homoeroticism are played out [. . .] reading in these stories inspires the protagonists to recognize, if not overtly express, lesbian desires of their own' (Winston, 1997, p. 61). Fanny reads Julia as 'odd' and 'queer' like her brother, Julius, and this seems to be an attraction (*CSF*, p. 216) and she assumes that Julia had many admirers in the past, seemingly because Fanny herself admires her (*CSF*, p. 218). Importantly, her speculation about Julia's suitors also reveals the extent to which Fanny is unconsciously attuned to the economics of heterosexual relationships and to the status of women as objects to be exchanged between men. This is evident in her suggestion that Julia's suitors would either have been her brother's friends or else ambitious men who were as much attracted to her possessions as to Julia herself (*CSF*, pp. 217–18).

The pins of the title have many possible associations. In the story itself, knowledge of pins is something that Fanny considers pertinent only to married women ('None of the Crayes had ever married. She [Julia] knew nothing about pins – nothing whatever' (*CSF*, p. 216)), possibly because of their phallic sexual connotations. However, from

an economic perspective the idea of 'pin money' would confirm this connection between pins and marriage. Pin money is an allowance traditionally given to a woman by her husband for her personal expenditure, or it is used to refer to women's earnings so as to indicate women's traditionally marginal position in the workplace and to trivialise women's earning power. In this sense, then, the title can be seen to foreground the sexual politics of heteropatriarchal capitalism. The apparent criticism of the shoddiness of this mass-produced commodity, the pins, can be read as a criticism of both heterosexual and capitalist systems. Neither Julia nor Fanny can rely on such gifts of money from men (as Julia's relatively impoverished state following the death of her brother suggests the vulnerability of women in such a system) and so their ability to earn their living is a serious business.

However, although pins seem to be pure commodities – impersonal, mass-produced, alienable objects – they can suggest other meanings and can cross over into other economies. Material objects, especially commodities, in Woolf's writing are never all they literally appear to be and their meanings can be unfixed as they circulate in a new network of associations and desires. As we have already seen, they can unpin and set into circulation other associations and possibilities, in excess of what is intended. This opening up of possibilities can be seen also in the changeability of Fanny's flower once it is released from the pin. Initially, it is a rose (symbolising heterosexual romance and a heterosexual economy of desire) that falls from Fanny's dress, but this becomes a carnation as the story progresses. The 'flower' which is returned and re-pinned to Fanny's breast at the end of the story remains ambiguously coded in this sense (*CSF*, p. 220). The pointless pins, then, give rise to a literal and semiotic release and to a fluidity of signification;[24] they make it possible to articulate, though not to reductively pin down, a sexuality perceived to be in excess of a heterosexual economy.

This change in flower also echoes Mauss' central idea that gifts are imbued with the identity of the giver so that the gift given bears forever the identity of the donor, and because of this must be reciprocated. As Julia gives back the flower that dropped out of Fanny's dress at the start of the story we are aware that this gift is now imbued with Julia's homoerotic desires and with Fanny's awareness of, and somewhat uncomfortable acceptance of (perhaps even panic about) these desires. It also suggests Fanny's recognition of these desires as her own. The rose that falls suggests Fanny's state on the threshold of heterosexual awakening, but it seems to be a carnation that is returned to her with a kiss at the end of the story.[25] That this returned flower/'gift' has been

imbued with Julia's homoerotic desire and identity is made explicit in Fanny's perception of Julia's seductive handling of it:

> And she picked up the carnation which had fallen on the floor, while Fanny searched for the pin. She crushed it, Fanny felt, voluptuously in her smooth veined hands stuck about with water-coloured rings set in pearls. The pressure of her fingers seemed to increase all that was most brilliant in the flower; to set it off; to make it more frilled, fresh, immaculate. (*CSF*, p. 217)

It seems then that the flower (and the female sexuality it can be seen to encode) is intensified, excessive and imbued with the disruptive power of lesbian passion and it is this, with the possibility and risk of future exchanges, that Fanny accepts with such trembling excitement and trepidation.[26] However, far from being 'deflowered'[27] (with the underlying sense of violation and being laid claim to that this term implies), Fanny, like the carnation, is revivified. The word 'immaculate' also suggests that something sacred is taking place, what Mauss might call the tie 'between souls' of donor and recipient in this gift exchange (Mauss, 1990, p. 12), suggesting Fanny's initiation into a new economy of desire.

At the point at which Julia returns the flower, Fanny is given an intimate insight into Julia's passion, and we see the immense risk Julia takes, as she reveals her desires:

> She saw Julia open her arms; saw her blaze; saw her kindle. Out of the night she burnt like a dead white star. Julia kissed her. Julia possessed her.
>
> 'Slater's pins have no points,' Miss Craye said, laughing queerly and relaxing her arms, as Fanny Wilmot pinned the flower to her breast with trembling fingers. (*CSF*, p. 220)

This spell-like moment accords well with the 'magical or religious hold' Mauss claims gifts can have (Mauss, 1989, p. 12), and also with Georg Simmel's understanding of the giving of a first gift, described as 'beauty, a spontaneous devotion to the other, an opening up and flowering from the "virgin soil" of the soul' (Simmel, 1950, pp. 392–3). As Osteen suggests in relation to Simmel's ideas, the gift 'constitutes perhaps the fullest expression of what it means to be human [. . .] forges social connections and enacts one's true freedom' (Osteen, 2002, p. 14).

The danger implicit in gift giving is also apparent here and Fanny interprets Julia's desire as intense and exhilarating, but also as having an

edge of violence. When Julia crushes the carnation, releasing its energy and vibrant colour, this signals a danger for Fanny who is also embraced passionately, symbolically 'crushed', by Julia at the end of the story. Fanny also experiences this embrace as possession, the danger of which we have already been alerted to in the life-denying nature of Julius's collection. However, as we have also seen, Julia, unlike Julius, is anti-acquisitive; her urge to possess Fanny expresses a powerful moment of erotic intensity and release, not a desire to own and take out of circulation. As is generally the case with gift-giving, Julia's seemingly spontaneous gesture is a risk for her; there is no guarantee of how her daring and unconventional gifts will be received, nor does she know whether they will be reciprocated. Julia's particular gifts are especially loaded with danger, but also with possibility; she seems to seek to awaken a more passionate experience of life and desire in Fanny, to imbue her with a new intensity (as she does with the carnation). However, the questions that the kiss and embrace raise remain unanswered and the reader is left to speculate beyond the end of the story about the meaning of this moment of generosity and about Fanny's response to it.

Clements argues that Woolf's story highlights the difficulty of constructing lesbian narratives given the weight of heterosexual narrative traditions, and I agree that this story draws attention to the issue of how to articulate women's homoerotic desires. However, in contrast to Bourdieu, for whom gift giving is a kind of fiction, an 'individual and collective misrecognition' of the economic calculation and self-interest of exchange masked as a gift (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 198), Woolf's fiction privileges the gift, and her experimental, ambiguous style tantalises and keeps possibilities in play, refusing to absolutely pin down and fix meanings that could invite censure and censorship. The privileging of the gift economy in Woolf's work (including in relation to the reader) seems key in maintaining this fluidity and ambiguity and metaphorically represents Woolf's modernist writing practice. Hoberman argues that the 'contrast between the collector of auratic objects and the consumer of mass-produced goods' (Hoberman, 2004, p. 81) in Woolf's short fiction implies two differing responses to modernity and two distinct approaches to modernist art:

> one that turns its back on the marketplace and conceptualizes art as the sum of heroically collected and preserved fragments of life; another that defines itself in and through the marketplace, its meanings multiple, negotiated, and co-produced by its consumers. (Hoberman, 2004, p. 85)

To this latter idea of modernism I would add the importance of gifts and the operation of a gift economy to a conception of Woolf's modernist art. This is premised on 'generosity and openness' (as Hoberman, drawing on Wicke's ideas, defines consumption in Woolf's work, 2004, p. 95) with multiple possibilities for (ex)changes of meaning and interpretation. As Fanny's various readings and co-writing of Julia's past make clear '[o]ne could make that [a snippet of information about Julia's past] yield what one liked' (*CSF*, p. 218). Woolf similarly refuses to limit the meaning of her story, but rather offers it up to her readers as a gift for us to make it yield what we like, to co-write and circulate it as we wish.

Woolf's story explores the interconnections between monetary, libidinal, and gift economies, and raises questions about the notion of value, artistic production, and interpretation. What we see here is the way that a momentary loss of a material object – marked as a commodity in this story – opens up a range of erotic, economic and creative possibilities. The flux and ambiguity of commodity culture are employed to subversive ends and alongside the operation of a gift economy give rise to a sense of intimacy and subversive potential. Finding the pin coincides with the revelation and recognition of another economy of desire, a desire that is in excess of both a heterosexual economy and a market economy. One point of Slater's pin/ 'Slater's Pins', then, is to prick the bubble of heterosexual romance and open up a different way of relating, bonding, of gaining a sense of identity. It also offers a radical challenge to the capitalist ethos and economic structures that pervade every aspect of our lives and Woolf, like Mauss, sees hope and vitality in generosity. The moment of *jouissance*, overflow and energy at the end of the story exceeds rational calculation and opens onto a different way of being. The lack of closure to this story leaves the reader reeling, as we too are made to feel Fanny's radically altered perception of her situation and her world. The openness of the ending, and indeed Fanny's newly opened state, leaves us questioning, invites our participation in the creative process, and relies on our generosity in offering our own version(s) of what happens next.

Notes

1. This was first translated into English in 1954 by anthropologist and French scholar, Ian Cunnison (James, 1998, p. 10).
2. See, for instance, Jennifer Wicke's essays "Coterie Consumption: Bloomsbury, Keynes, and Modernism as Marketing" and "Mrs Dalloway Goes to Market: Woolf, Keynes, and Modern Markets" as examples of the importance of Keynsian ideas on Woolf's fiction.

3. Such as in acts of hospitality and festivals (Mauss, 1990, pp. 65–6), donations to the arts, the co-operative groupings, such as Friendly Societies in Britain (Mauss, 1990, p. 69), in the movement to provide unemployment benefits in Britain (Mauss, 1990, pp. 67–8), and State interventions in France, such as social insurance legislation and family assistance funds (Mauss, 1990, p. 67). However, Ilana Silber points out that Mauss does not distinguish between modern manifestations of the gift economy and archaic and ancient civilisations (Silber, 1998, pp. 136–7).
4. Mauss' ideas and views have been criticised in a number of ways and for a variety of reasons. His work has been seen as too essentialist and reductive in its apparent conception of western and non-western cultures as binary oppositions (Carrier, 1995, pp. 191–2; p. 201). Testart challenges the universally applied notion of obligation, instead distinguishing the feeling of obligation to reciprocate from what is legally obligatory.
5. She was, of course, also personally interested and involved in the Women's Co-operative Guild, activities Mauss identifies as gift economy.
6. Bourdieu, for example, argues that 'far from unfolding mechanically, the series of acts which, apprehended from outside and after the event, appears as a cycle of reciprocity, presupposes a continuous creation and may be interrupted at any stage' (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 197). In fact, in Bourdieu's view the maintenance of a sense of uncertainty is crucial to maintain the illusion of the gift as something other than a calculated exchange. For Mauss, however, this delay in reciprocation is part of the gift exchange itself, not a smoke-screen masking a market exchange as Bourdieu suggests (Mauss, 1990, pp. 35–6).
7. Silber notes that the specific gift practices Mauss identifies in modern society 'are either various systems of financial sharing within the framework of workers' unions or professional associations, or some form of centralised redistribution of wealth and social insurance through the provision of the state' (Silber, 1998, p. 136). However, the co-existence of gift and market economies is one that Mauss identifies in other non-Western cultures as well, with market exchanges being 'marked by very hard bargaining' which is 'unworthy' of gift exchange for the peoples of the Trobriand Islands, for example (Mauss, 1990, p. 22).
8. As several critics of Maussian ideas have suggested. For instance, Gasché, Derrida and Bourdieu argue in different ways that Mauss' theory negates the possibility of the gift, with the system of reciprocity resembling an economic exchange.
9. Carrier refers to the way that the gift 'takes on a special meaning for the people involved that is over and above, and may even contradict, its meaning as a commodity-sign or even its utility' (Carrier, 1995, pp. 8–9).
10. In her influential essay, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex", Gayle Rubin takes issue with the work of structural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss on the importance of gift exchange in primitive societies, notably the exchange of women as gifts to consolidate bonds of kinship, in his study *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*. Writing from a feminist perspective, Rubin argues that because women are 'sexual semi-objects – gifts', rather than 'exchange partners' or 'sexual subjects', they cannot 'realize the [social] benefits of their own circulation' (Rubin, 1998, pp. 542–3). She

suggests that the practice of the 'exchange of women' is 'more pronounced and commercialized in more "civilized" societies' and goes on to discuss such practice as fundamental to the constitution of dualistic gender identities, socio-economic relations and 'obligatory heterosexuality' in a range of male-dominated societies (Rubin, 1998, p. 543; p. 545; p. 548). Significantly, she argues that '[t]he asymmetry of gender – the difference between exchanger and exchanged – entails the constraint of female sexuality' (Rubin, 1998, p. 548).

11. See "Castration or Decapitation?" and "The Laugh of the Medusa", for example.
12. See, for instance, Paul Delany's *Literature, Money and the Market*; Jane Garrity's "Selling Culture to the 'Civilized': Bloomsbury, British Vogue, and the Marketing of National Identity" and "Virginia Woolf, Intellectual Harlotry, and 1920s British *Vogue*"; Leslie Hankins's "Virginia Woolf and Walter Benjamin Selling Out(siders)"; Pamela Caughie's *Virginia Woolf and Postmodernism: Literature in Quest and Question of Itself*; and Reginald Abbott's "What Miss Kilman's Petticoat Means: Virginia Woolf, Shopping, and Spectacle".
13. Garrity, for instance, argues that '[f]or Woolf, making money is both an act of subversion – precisely because she's a woman – and a form of contamination, because it exposes the economic basis of her literary production' (Garrity, 2000, p. 197).
14. As others have pointed out for Woolf the exchange of commodities in a capitalist economy and the exchange of women in a patriarchal sexual economy are interrelated (Elliot and Wallace, 1994, p. 73).
15. Gifts from female relatives and friends literally and symbolically facilitated Woolf's entry into the public domain, providing her with the degree of independence and confidence she needed to write. Importantly, these include her legacy from her aunt Caroline Emelia and the inkpot from Violet Dickinson, her first present to Woolf in her new independent life at Gordon Square. These gifts are mentioned by Snaith in relation to Woolf's negotiation of the public/private boundary (Snaith, 2000, p. 25).
16. Given potentially as a gift of love or punishment for Sackville-West's infidelity, or both (see Nicholson, 1990, p. 186; Raitt and Snaith), this fantasy version of the story of Sackville-West's life also ironically proved to be Woolf's most lucrative novel to date (see Majumdar and McLaurin, 1975, p. 6). Sackville-West's 'thank you' letter suggests both her gratitude and a sense of entrapment (see letter cited in DeSalvo and Leaska, 1992, p. 305; also in Raitt, 1993, p. 40).
17. Smith argues that lesbian panic is 'the uncertainty of the female protagonist (or antagonist) about *her* own sexual identity' and 'occurs when a character – or, conceivably, an author – is either unable or unwilling to confront or reveal her own lesbianism or lesbian desire' (Smith, 1997, pp. 3–4; p. 2; emphasis in original), both of which stem from a fear of loss of value and identity in a heterocentric social order: 'the fear of the loss of identity and value as an object of exchange, often combined with the fear of responsibility for one's own sexuality, is a characteristic response' (Smith, 1997, p. 6).
18. This character's name and the explicit connection with classical antiquity suggests an allusion to the acquisitive imperialism of Julius Caesar, a figure keen to 'seize' things and women (seize her?) as the spoils of war.

19. As Walter Benjamin explains, an auratic object is unique or authentic and bears 'testimony to the history which it has experienced' as well as to its origins and existence 'in the fabric of tradition' and ritual (Benjamin, 1968, p. 223; p. 225). This authenticity lends the object authority and value. Benjamin draws a distinction between auratic and mechanically produced objects and works of art (like photography and especially film), which gain value through the responses they elicit in the consumer or audience (Benjamin, 1968, pp. 236–7). Drawing on Benjamin's work, Ruth Hoberman also persuasively discusses the distinction between the shopper and the collector in Woolf's work and argues for 'an anti-collecting aesthetic' in Woolf's shorter fiction which 'privileges the shopper over the collector' (Hoberman, 2004, p. 81).
20. Heather Levy also considers that Fanny interprets this comment about Slater's pins as a 'seductive device', but explains this comment as being an indication of Fanny's adoration of Julia, a feeling in part stimulated by the social inequalities between them (Levy, 1994, p. 89). In contrast, Susan Clements argues that Fanny is shocked about the coded suggestion that the penis and heterosexuality are pointless (Clements, 1994, p. 18). Indeed, 'pin' is slang for penis from the seventeenth century onwards, as are 'prick' and 'pointer' from the nineteenth century onwards (Beale, 1984, p. 885; p. 903). 'Pincase' and 'pincushion' are slang terms for the female pudenda from the seventeenth to early twentieth century (Beale, 1984, p. 885).
21. See Rubin Note 10.
22. In the 'Editorial Procedures' for her edition of *The Complete Shorter Fiction of Virginia Woolf*, Susan Dick explains the discrepancies between the versions as being due to the fact that Leonard Woolf reprinted the story in *A Haunted House* from the typescript rather than from the version published in *Forum* in 1928 (*CSF*, p. 9).
23. It is worth remembering that shortly after Woolf finished this story in July 1927, she began her own imaginative recreation of the history of a woman she very much loved and lusted after (see letter to Vita Sackville-West, 9 October 1927, *L*3, pp. 428–9). Her own willingness to speculate and imagine in her fantastical version of Vita Sackville-West's past and present did actually become a gift to her lover in 1928 (see Note 16).
24. Clements and Winston also discuss the confusion of pronouns which gives rise to a fluidity in terms of the identity of the characters.
25. A carnation is also used to symbolise lesbian desire in Katherine Mansfield's story "Carnation" (1918), a story which Winston claims as an intertext for Woolf's "Slater's Pins" (Winston, 1997, pp. 63–4).
26. Levy also suggests that Fanny's admiration of Julia's hands is an observation of 'their potential for sexual joy' (Levy, 1994, p. 89).
27. Thanks to my friend and colleague, the late Mike Davis, for suggesting this possible word play.

7

How Should One Sell a Book? Production Methods, Material Objects and Marketing at the Hogarth Press

Elizabeth Willson Gordon

In 1931, over a decade after the Hogarth Press was founded, the sales and buzz surrounding Virginia Woolf's latest novel reveal that 'the public apparently ha[d] decided that to be IT one must have *The Waves* on the drawing-room table' (Lehmann, 1978, p. 28). How was a book authored by Woolf and published by the Hogarth Press able to confer 'IT' status in Britain?

Though there is 'no doubt that Georgian modernism was shaped by a series of small magazines and publishing houses' (McDonald, 2003, p. 228), and there is voluminous interest in Virginia Woolf's artistic productions, there has been little theorising of the relationship between the Hogarth Press as business and cultural institution. Perhaps this is in part due to the fact that there exists a familiar and widely accepted narrative of the Hogarth Press that covers over key tensions between the multiple roles it played. Beginning with the first hand-press, which famously sat in the dining room at Hogarth House, the typical narrative presents an unassuming origin that would almost miraculously become a successful business and cultural institution: it is a compelling story. This story focuses on the various purposes and goals of the Press, such as for Virginia to be free of Gerald Duckworth as a publisher, for it to be therapy and recreation for her, and for Leonard and Virginia to publish work that other publishers would not. Following from these premises is the understanding of the institution as non-commercial. Certain elements of the Hogarth Press narrative were first put forth by Press announcements, correspondence by the Woolfs, and later by Leonard in his autobiography, seemingly credible and trustworthy sources. These elements have then been repeated by many scholars and critics to the point that, even in 1979, 'the story of Leonard and Virginia Woolf's Hogarth Press has become so well known that it hardly bears repeating'

(Peters, 1979, p. 198). Edward Bishop, in writing about persistent myths and misconceptions about the publication of Joyce's *Ulysses*, suggests that stories 'recur because they are factoids, things repeated so often that they are assumed to be true' (Bishop, 2004, p. 203). The standard Hogarth Press narrative, while not false, privileges early aspects of the Press and ignores the complexity of Hogarth Press practices even from the start. The purpose here is to offer a detailed account of the early functioning of the Hogarth Press, focusing on the interplay of aspects of book production which are often given only cursory attention – the production methods, material characteristics of the texts, as well as the circulation and advertisement of the books produced by the Press – with a view to understanding how it was able to maintain both artistic integrity and financial viability over a long period of time.

The answer lies in the interplay of elements of book production as well as in understanding that the Hogarth Press was a hub of production and public relations decisions, an investor of capital, as well as an imprint. With one eye to the past and one to the future, the Press positioned itself in the market but not of it, published new books in old ways, and old books in new ways.[1] Early material characteristics, production, rhetoric, advertising and distribution work together, even in their contradictions, to produce ambiguity, and multiple levels of meaning. Symbolic signification occurs at all levels in the production of a book in order to both create an art object and make the object recognisable as such. My goal is to show the sophisticated and productive negotiation of seemingly contradictory positions made use of by the Press and the Woolfs: commercial/artistic, professional/amateur, traditional/avant-garde, elitist/democratic. Familiar stories and information need to be reexamined in the light of these conflicting discourses. Though Press practices changed over time, my primary focus will be on the early years of the Press as they have fundamentally shaped the understanding of the institution. The historical discourses the Press invoked through materiality, production and advertising practices in the years 1917–1923 provide a context for the later, and less discussed, direction and practices of the Press.

The Woolfs bought a platen hand-press from the Excelsior Company and some Caslon Old Face type in March of 1917.[2] The standard belief is that *Two Stories* was their first publication, but in the sense of printing and publishing, that is, physically producing a text and making it public, there is one that predates the first work of fiction. The first Hogarth Press publication was an advertisement, a notice sent out to

solicit buyers. Here, as often, the work of art eclipses other types of production, genres that do not 'count' for those studying the Press. In this way it is an origin that has been hidden. The notice is obviously hand-set and unevenly inked. Under a large bold heading announcing 'THE HOGARTH PRESS', it reads:

> It is proposed to issue shortly a
> pamphlet containing two
> short stories by Leonard Woolf and Virginia Woolf,
> (price, include-
> ing postage 1/2).
> If you desire a copy to be sent to you,
> please fill up the
> form below and send it with a P.O. to L.S. Woolf at
> the ab-
> ove address before June
> A limited edition only will be issued.
>
> (Qtd. in *L2*, p. 153)

Following is a request form that asked for the number of copies, total price, name and address of the buyer. From the first, the Woolfs invoked a discourse of exclusivity regarding the Press productions, thus playing on a desire to have what not everyone can. Further, the announcements, specifically sent to certain people, created a limited and select group, including friends and Omega Workshop supporters. An institution of this sort therefore confers distinction on a participant as one of the 'select few'. Even though in later years the Press became more commercial, this distinction continued to attach itself to Press productions in part because of the construction of its origin. The first Press production, an advertisement, is significant in shaping the reception and sales success of *Two Stories*.

The first literary work consisted of "The Mark on the Wall" by Virginia and "Three Jews" by Leonard and four woodcuts by Dora Carrington. Virginia set the type and Leonard did the machining. The handpress had the capacity to print one demi-octavo page at a time. As Hermione Lee calculates, to 'print 134 copies of each page of *Two Stories*, a 32 page booklet would have involved a minimum of 4,154 pulls' (Lee, 1996, p. 816). This very early production, in being put up for sale, was uncharacteristic of small and/or private presses, which often distributed publications as gifts. Though the initial advertised price was 1s.2d., it was soon raised to 1s.6d. and increased again to 2s. as 'the supply

began to run out' (Woolmer, 1986, p. 3). Quite remarkably, *Two Stories* turned a profit of £7.1s.

The discourses and positions assumed by the Press characterise it as a certain type of institution and therefore the works it produced as a specific type of cultural artifact. Specific discourses invoked include that of the Arts and Crafts movement, the rhetoric of art as a disinterested pursuit, in addition to modernist innovations and experimentation. The more distant past and even manuscript texts are also invoked by some of the material practices and distribution methods of the Press. The first half of the nineteenth century saw, along with the 'growing prosperity of the middle classes, [. . .] many who had sufficient time, money and education to find printing a profitable and amusing pastime' (Cave, 1971, p. 114). Private, at home printing has a lineage as a Victorian parlour hobby. Beyond that is the genteel tradition of private presses used for pleasure or altruistic purposes. An historical perspective is needed to understand the significance of the materiality and distribution of Press productions as well as the rhetoric that positions the Press.

Important historical precedents for the Hogarth Press, in particular for understanding the aesthetic messages of the materiality of its publications, are, then, William Morris's Kelmscott Press, the Doves Press, and Roger Fry's Omega Workshops. The Woolfs, and Fry, positioned themselves in opposition to Morris's 'nostalgia for the past [. . . and] antipathy toward the use of machines in art' (Rosenbaum, 1998, p. 151) but there is also some continuity with Morris's project. Rather than clear opposition, the Hogarth Press made use of the past, nostalgia and the antipathy toward machines, but in different and perhaps more subtle ways. Further, not all turn of the century fine printing followed the Kelmscott style. The less discussed Doves Press advocated simple design, following 'Cobden-Sanderson's dictum that "the whole duty of typography ... is to communicate, without loss by the way, the thought or image intended to be communicated by the author"' (qtd. in Cave, 1971, p. 147). Cave argues that it 'was this restraint, and not Morris's lavish romanticism, which was to point the way for printing in the first half of the twentieth century' (Cave, 1971, p. 147). Both the Omega Workshops and the Hogarth Press wanted to avoid 'highly crafted luxurious products' while 'emphasizing utility, attractiveness and spontaneity' (Rosenbaum, 1998, p. 152). This was no rejection of aesthetics, but a change in the type of aesthetic pleasure created by a text. Rather than elaborate decoration and illustration, Hogarth Press texts were more simply decorated; the inclusion of 'imperfections' that make clear the object was produced by hand create an appeal of their own. Leonard,

echoing the 1922 anniversary statement of the Press, explains that they 'were interested primarily in the immaterial inside of a book, what the author had to say and how he said it', rejecting the private presses which 'published finely printed books, which [. . .] are meant not to be read, but to be looked at' (L. Woolf, 1967, p. 80). The focus was on the words, the linguistic codes and that which had literary merit. Nevertheless, by 1930 the thing was to have *The Waves* on display.

The multiple roles that Virginia Woolf had in the production of books, and of her own books in particular, are central to an understanding of her work. She produced books as well as texts. Woolf's frequently quoted statement in her diary, 'I'm the only woman in England free to write what I like' (*D*3, p. 43) does not do justice to the complexity of the situation. Often in the production of books the artisanal labour is segregated from the artistic, but in the case of the Woolfs, at the beginning of the Press, they wrote books, printed and published them, advertised them, and even travelled them. The multiple roles are in part what make the case of the early Hogarth Press such a remarkable instance of cultural production. While much has been made of Hogarth Press hand-printing, other aspects of production have been under-examined. Even when books were sent out to commercial printers, beginning in 1919, the Woolfs, as publishers, had more control over the process than many artists. As Anna Snaith notes, 'There was less separation between the creation, production and commodification of the text. Rather than the text being relinquished upon completion of the manuscript, thereby distinctly marking internal and private writing from public and external packaging, the stages were blurred by Woolf's ownership of her own press' (Snaith, 2000, p. 45). Woolf was involved in binding and marketing those texts.

As well, Woolf's involvement with the craft of printing, her ink-stained fingers, had important implications for her identity both in terms of class and gender. Juliet Dusinberre writes that having 'a printing press of [her] own' placed Woolf outside of the ivory tower and in 'a new relation between amateur and professional which would suit women' (Dusinberre, 1997, p. 39). Dusinberre argues that Woolf 'knew that when she printed her own works she was part of an alternative tradition in which outsiders from high culture – whether by choice or necessity – could speak with a free voice to readers beyond the pale of high culture' (Dusinberre, 1997, p. 35). One can gain credibility and make political statements both through the writing and making of books. Bridget Elliott and Jo-Ann Wallace argue Woolf was in tension as a modernist woman 'between, on the one hand, a "feminist"

ideology of professionalism which demanded the right to a fair, living wage for one's cultural labour and, on the other hand, an individualist and "modernist" ideology of artistic (and financial) disinterestedness' (Elliott and Wallace, 1994, p. 70). They go on to argue that for Woolf, 'it is only outside of market considerations, with the help of her own press and the "private criticism" of friends, that she can aspire to genuine literary substance' (Elliott and Wallace, 1994, p. 72). The Press, however, also offers Woolf, over time, the means to make considerable sums of money, which was for her both a goal and a source of enjoyment. A balancing act occurs within Press rhetoric and practices: to make money and art. Book production was then in the traditions of the genteel hobby, genuine artistic production, a grounded professionalism, and the outsider's response to authority. A printing press of one's own is both elitist and democratic.

Production methods were also important because, in part, what distinguished the early Hogarth publications as objects was the hand-printing, 'the "artisanal" labour of typesetting and printing' (Marcus, 1996, p. 143), which was added to the artistic productions of the same individuals. This labour – visible in the 'imperfections' of the texts – created an aura for texts that was both desirable and marketable. According to Georg Simmel, in his *Philosophy of Money* (1900), it is the anonymity and separation of worker from product and means of production, which results in the loss of the aura (Simmel, 1990, p. 456). In seeming recognition of this, the bookseller James Bain told Virginia early in their publishing venture, 'so long as you print things yourself I can guarantee you an immediate sale and high prices; but when you have books printed for you, its [*sic*] a very different matter [. . .]. Its [*sic*] the personal touch' (*L2*, p. 378). The end result was a certain market niche for objects that conveyed distinction and they conferred some of that distinction on to the person who knew enough to buy them.

Limited editions produced by Presses such as the Kelmscott in their elaborate and expensive production 'increasingly resembled the work of art' and were 'assimilated by the rare and antiquarian book markets that had matured in the nineteenth century, turning them into commodities and potential investments' (Rainey, 1998, p. 100). Thus, in addressing not the broad public, but a select group 'with a luxury good that emphasized innovation and was produced in small quantities', the 'limited edition established a kind of special productive space insulated from the harsh exigencies of the larger marketplace' (Rainey, 1998, p. 101). What the Hogarth Press did is analogous in some important

ways. The early production methods, especially hand-printing, necessarily limited the size of the print runs. So too did the type of text being published. Though the Press made efforts to distance itself from 'fine printing', Hogarth Press texts became valuable and collectible as art objects of a different type. Especially in the case of hand-printing, the Press benefited from the effects of a limited edition, scarcity, without the charge of strategy for profit, but with the same result: profit. In the early years, even the more commercial publications, ones which used commercial printers, were not done in particularly large print runs, often less than 500 copies with a maximum of about 1,000. The price of the books also distinguishes the Press from producers of luxury editions. The least expensive copies of the first edition of *Ulysses* were about £3.3s. (150 francs), while Woolf's *Jacob's Room*, also published in 1922, was 7s.6d., a standard price for a novel. Most Hogarth Press novels sold at this price and shorter works sold for less. The time it took for Hogarth Press books to increase in monetary value was longer than for luxury editions.

Rosenbaum speculates that the 'casualness and lack of finish in some of their printing was deliberate' (Rosenbaum, 1998, p. 152). An interesting example of the importance of the bibliographic codes, the aesthetic position communicated through the materiality, is in the production of Katherine Mansfield's *Prelude*. The running head for the text was printed as 'The Prelude' rather than 'Prelude' and when J. M. Murray noticed this, it was changed, but only on the pages which remained to be printed. Rosenbaum suggests that this was done to save costs, but it is also possible that this is a strategic statement of priorities besides that of economic frugality. Accuracy of content is not paramount, nor is the uniformity of form. In undermining both the form and the content of the book the Press distances itself from fine printing as well as commercial printing. The unaltered change makes a statement of amateurism and is a reminder of the fallible human subject(s) involved in the production, asserting the Press's value of unconventionality. One could read the casualness as a marketing strategy.

Bright, vibrant colours also characterised Hogarth Press publications. *Two Stories* was bound in varying bright colours of Japanese paper. Cave notes that the 'use of unusual and attractive cover papers was to become a feature of the Hogarth Press', and this 'may have been responsible for starting the fashion there was in the 1920s for such cover papers' (Cave, 1971, p. 201). While the productions were not 'fine printing' they were admired and even influential in book making. The covers for Woolf's novels are closely associated with the post-impressionist

designs of Vanessa Bell. These covers 'contributed to the definition of the "aesthetic" of the Press and influenced the perception and reception of Woolf's writings' (Marcus, 1996, p. 141). Leonard famously recounts that the *Jacob's Room* cover, designed by Bell, since it 'did not represent a desirable female or even Jacob or his room, [. . .] was what in 1923 many people would have called reproachfully post-impressionist. It was almost universally condemned by the booksellers, and several of the buyers laughed at it' (L. Woolf, 1967, p. 76). Bell's jackets are now highly sought after by book collectors and greatly increase the purchase price of Woolf's books. Hogarth Press books looked different, not only from 'fine-print' luxurious Kelmscott Press books, or even the Nonesuch Press, but also from contemporary commercial printers such as Cape or Heinemann. The covers, like much of the material contained in them, looked experimental and even avant-garde.

The early publications also contained material links with the more distant past for those with the knowledge and education to identify them. A certain continuity with the past served to authorise Press productions by bestowing a sense of artistic and historical credibility on them but also, as importantly, by differentiating them from mass-market explicitly for-profit contemporary publishers. In creating products that were both old and new, they could appear both modern and legitimated by tradition. Wendy Wall uses the concept of the 'literary psuedomorph' to discuss transitional manuscripts that bridge the eras of handwritten and printed texts. Early printed texts in many ways resembled manuscripts in order to make them comprehensible and more valid as a new form: elements of the past conferred credibility, as well as recognisability, on the new. The concept of the pseudomorph is also applicable to the Hogarth Press texts in a broad sense, to explain how the Press could capitalise 'on the familiarity of past forms but could bend them to new use in the process' (Wall, 1993, p. 231) both in terms of the material productions and their distribution. The use of xylography, or printing using woodcuts, predates moveable type and woodcuts were a frequent component in Hogarth publications from the start. Four woodcuts by Dora Carrington were included in *Two Stories*. Hand-printing and hand-made papers, small print runs, and distribution through personal connection all conferred historical credibility and prestige for those in the select group.

The Woolfs continued to hand-print some books themselves until 1932, for a total of thirty-four. This choice, in addition to being a continuation of a hobby, was done in part to continue to emphasise the niche or positioning of the Press. What may be surprising is that these

productions are a small percentage of 527 titles published between 1917 and 1946 and some of those other titles sold many copies and were even best-sellers.[3] Before 1923, nineteen books were hand printed out of a total of forty. The symbolic capital accrued in the early years seems to have carried on over time, with the Press reaping the benefits of an early characterisation as small and non-commercial. As is the case with other early aspects of the Press, the early production over-determines the view of the Press. Rosenbaum puts forth a common critical view of the Press when he writes that the 'Hogarth Press refused to publish something just because it would sell' (Rosenbaum, 1998, p. 152). However, the large sales of some titles seem to indicate more than accident.

The official Press rhetoric was one way to affirm the non-commerciality of the Press and the Woolfs' disinterestedness: the intentions were aesthetic and artistic. The 1922 anniversary publication made clear that the primary goal was not a financial one, stating, 'We aimed in the first place at producing works of genuine merit which, for reasons well known and difficult to gainsay, could scarcely hope to secure publication through ordinary channels. In the second place we were resolved to produce no book merely with a view to pecuniary profit' (qtd. in Willis, 1992, p. 63). Disinterestedness is particularly key to the modern conception of art as a way of explaining its purpose and relation to the market. The concept is not exclusive to the modernist moment and Martha Woodmansee charts its beginnings in the late eighteenth century. The evaluation of art shifted from its instrumentality, its effect on people, to an intrinsic value that was analogous to the theology of German pietism: one should appreciate art as one once did God, for its own sake. According to Karl Moritz, the eighteenth century writer on aesthetics, fine art 'does not have its purpose outside itself, and does not exist for the sake of the perfection of anything else, but rather for the sake of its own internal perfection' (qtd. in Woodmansee, 1994, p. 18). Woodmansee proposes that the shift in the conception of art's purpose was a reaction to the alteration of material conditions: 'rooted in the far-reaching changes in the production, distribution, and consumption of reading material that marked the later eighteenth century' (Woodmansee, 1994, p. 32). With the expansion of the reading public and literature becoming 'subject to the laws of a market economy, the instrumentalist theory [. . .] was found to justify the wrong works' (Woodmansee, 1994, p. 32), that is, the popular. In the new conception, in order to be art, works should be produced with only aesthetic intentions and had intrinsic value; it 'follows then that the effects of a work

of art on an audience are irrelevant to its value' (Woodmansee, 1994, p. 18). Thus, the loss of instrumentality or effect, the very difficulty of art, 'could be recuperated as a (supreme) virtue' (Woodmansee, 1994, p. 32). The value of art could be determined apart from the market; this view was very influential in the early twentieth century where it was particularly useful for difficult modernist writers whose small audiences were then signs of the virtue of their work.

Pierre Bourdieu also discusses the authorising discourses in cultural production. He notes, art 'demonstrates its authenticity by the fact that it brings in no income ... [it] proves its claim to authenticity by its disinterestedness' (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 40). The 'authenticity' creates symbolic capital for the art that over time will become economic capital. It is through the lack of income that a work demonstrates its authenticity. As a matter of intentions, authenticity is difficult to prove. The Hogarth Press did make relatively small profits in the years up to 1923 (from a high of £68.19.4 in 1920 to a low of £5.7.8 in 1923) (Willis, 1992, Appendix B), though there were no years of net loss, as was the case with many modernist publishing, printing, and magazine ventures that survived through patron investment. There were years of large profits in the late twenties and thirties. Being read as seeking economic success could be dangerous for the Press and one response was rhetorical positioning in things such as Press announcements, the introductions to catalogues and the Woolfs' correspondence.

In May of 1918 Virginia Woolf wrote the official Hogarth Press letter to Harriet Weaver regarding the publication of *Ulysses*. After writing that unfortunately their resources were inadequate to print such a long book she reiterates the goals of the Press, sounding very much like Leonard: 'We very much regret this as it is our aim to produce writing of merit which the ordinary publisher refuses' (*L*2, p. 242). Such a letter also contradicts the common assumption that Leonard, exclusively, handled all business aspects of the Press and she had no concern for pragmatic matters of publishing. Woolf further reveals her views of the Press in a letter to Ralph Partridge on the 10 November 1922 regarding a conversation they had had about the possible sale of the Press to Constables, a London publishing firm. Woolf says that she is 'indignant with [Partridge] for going on to suggest that [they] were ready, as [he] said, to "sell the press to the highest bidder"' and thinks she 'may have left [him] with the impression that [she is] in favour of amalgamation with some big firm in order to increase the publicity of [her] own books and profits. If [he does] think this, [he is] quite wrong'. She goes on to clarify that what made her

> blood boil was [his] assumption that [they] are quite ready to be bamboozled with a bargain which would destroy the character of the press for the sake of money or pride or convenience; and that [he] must protect its rights. After all [they] have given the press whatever character it may have, and if [he's] going to tell [her] that [he] care[s] more about it than [she does], or know[s] better what's good for it, [she] must reply that [he's] a donkey. (*L2*, p. 583)

There is certainly some humour in her comments but she is pointed in her remarks about the importance of understanding the motivations for the Press and clarifying what the priorities are and what they are not. She is not seeking greater publicity or profit for her own work, but more importantly, the Press has a character that would be destroyed by a sale to another business for profit or convenience. Woolf also makes clear the sense of responsibility she and Leonard feel for its character and their willingness to protect it.

Though it is not possible here to deal exhaustively with the marketing practices of the Press, a few further exemplary strategies will help to show how the Press situated its books. Hogarth Press advertising had a fairly subtle and modest beginning. The very first advertisement was the notice of publication sent out for *Two Stories*, but with the publication of the second text, the circle of publicity widened as the first review copies were sent out. According to Leonard, 'When we started printing and publishing with our Publication No. 1, we did not send out any review copies, but in the case of *Prelude*, Tom's *Poems*, and *Kew Gardens* we sent review copies to *The Times Literary Supplement*' (L. Woolf, 1964, p. 241). The Hogarth Press records give evidence of four review copies for *Prelude* and six for *Poems*. Reviews are a type of euphemistic advertising and their impact is demonstrated in the case of *Kew Gardens*. The book received a positive, anonymous review in the 29 May 1919 *Times Literary Supplement* where it was described as having an 'odd, Fitzroy-square-looking cover' and being 'a work of art, made, "created," as we say, finished, four-square; a thing of original and therefore strange beauty, with its own "atmosphere," its own vital force' (qtd. in Majumdar and McLaurin, 1975, p. 67). The Woolfs received a large number of orders following the review's publication and the Press used the commercial printer, Richard Madley, to print 500 more copies in June 1919.

Leonard, in his autobiography asserts that the 'first commercial venture' (L. Woolf, 1967, p. 67) was a translation of Maxim Gorky's *Reminiscences of Tolstoi* and that the Press did not seek out either the text or its success. The book was brought to them by S. S. Koteliansky

and when he suggested they should publish it, they 'were faced with a difficult decision. He translated some of it to us and we saw at once that it was a masterpiece. If we published it, we should have to print at least 1,000 copies, a number which we could not possibly manage ourselves' (L. Woolf, 1967, p. 67). Reluctant expansion would become a repeated explanation for the increase in the business of the Hogarth Press. Virginia reviewed Gorky's publication positively in an anonymous review in the *Nation and Athenaeum*: 'a well-placed puff' (Luftig, 1987, p. 5). Victor Luftig calls the early marketing of the Russian translations 'commercial cleverness' (Luftig, 1987, p. 5). The title of another publication, *Tolstoi's Love Letters,* was 'a shrewd marketing decision' since there were only fourteen love letters and they 'comprised little more than one-third of a 134-page book' (most of the pages were a foreword and closing by Paul Biryukov) (Luftig, 1987, p. 5). Despite the official reluctance to expand, sales possibilities were not ignored.

Coinciding with the publication of Gorky's book in July of 1920, the Press placed its first newspaper advertisements. They put print ads in the *Times, Nation, Manchester Guardian,* and *New Statesman* that listed their eight titles. Advertising was also placed in the backs of Hogarth Press books. One early example is the list of publications included in the back of Gorky's *Reminiscences* and included the 'To Be Published Shortly' listing *The Story of the Siren* by E. M. Forster, along with new and previous publications.

Though Press announcements made it clear that the goal of the Press was to print that which would not otherwise be printed, the Woolfs were also interested in publishing important art such as Eliot's *The Waste Land*. It had already been published in *The Dial*, *The Criterion*, and in book form by Boni and Liveright, yet the Hogarth Press still published it in 1923. This publication was an astute move and, according to Laura Marcus, 'helped to consolidate the Woolfs' reputation as publishers of modernist writing' (Marcus, 1996, p. 126). *The Waste Land* appeared during the same year as the more commercial *Tolstoi's Love Letters*.

Reputation was central to marketing techniques that involved developing the significance of the imprint, the name of the Press, and subsequently adding the publisher's device, a logo. The early imprint was quite personal, some version of 'Printed & published by Leonard and Virginia Woolf at the Hogarth Press'. The reputation of the Press is the 'seal of approval' or brand name and this was, in part, a material and aesthetic identification. As early as '1918 Woolf had suggested to Bell that she produce a cover design for *Kew Gardens* that need not have "reference" to the story and that could be used, with a change of title,

for subsequent publications: it would be, Woolf wrote, "a tremendous draw"' (Marcus, 1996, p. 141). The reputation of the Press and the significations of its name developed over time as the Press list grew. It is therefore important to look at some key later developments in Press practices. Though the 1918 plan was never fulfilled, Bell did design the wolf's-head logo in 1925, which worked as a sign for the Press as a whole. Further, through her many distinctive covers, Bell established a certain look for Woolf's publications in Britain that had some of the similar properties of recognisability. Her cover designs were used even after Woolf's death. Using semiology, Leiss, Kline and Jhally discuss the way people 'take part in the creation of meaning in messages' and the need for awareness 'of the relevant referent system' in order to decode the message (Leiss et al., 1990, p. 208). The Hogarth Press had a specialised target group for their name, imprint, and logo. The Press name, referring to the place of residence, the Woolfs' names in the imprint, and their logo, the wolf's head, all invoked the people involved, adding their reputations to those of the Press. These signs would be especially meaningful for those who knew the place and people behind them in a way that distinguished the insiders from the general public.

Another later marketing strategy involving Virginia Woolf's reputation as an author as well as the reputation and finances of the Press is the 1929 Uniform Edition. Reissuing Woolf's works had been a Press practice since 1919 when it republished *The Mark on the Wall*. In 1929 the focus on Woolf's works was more comprehensive and formalised. The Press reprinted the first editions of *The Voyage Out*, *Jacob's Room*, *The Common Reader* and *Mrs. Dalloway* by photo-offset. The books were bound in jade-green cloth and the price was reduced to 5s. In 1930, *To the Lighthouse*, *Night and Day* and *A Room of One's Own* were issued in this edition. According to Willis, the 'Uniform Editions in small crown octavo volumes [. . .] marked one more stage in the evolution of the Hogarth Press into a commercial publishing house' (Willis, 1992, p. 155). The new edition also meant 'easier production, lower reprinting costs, and certain marketing advantages in the attractive uniform volumes' (Willis, 1992, p. 156). Reprinting Woolf's works as a series, keeping them in print, shows their importance both to the Press and as an artistic achievement, while she was in mid-career. The cultural significance of a second trade edition is established through the historical precedents. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, large volumes were 'used for serious literature' while the 'smaller were used for the cheap editions reserved for popular literature' (Genette, 1997, p. 18). Over time, however, 'serious works that also proved commercially

successful could be put out in a new edition in "small format"' (Genette, 1997, p. 18) and therefore there was ambiguity in the meaning of a cheaper edition. The 'pocket format [was] capable of connoting equally well a work's "popular" nature or its admission into the pantheon of classic' (Genette, 1997, p. 18).

The Hogarth Press seems to have intended the latter with the issue of all of Woolf's novels in a cheaper, if not always smaller, edition. The novels were given pride of place in Press lists and catalogues, and were the priority to be kept in print during wartime paper shortages. Once again, however, the ambiguity is useful; the works were popular and they did sell well. Willis notes that the decision to publish the Uniform Edition is a dual assertion of both 'the commercial value of Virginia's novels and their claim to artistic greatness. They were confirmed in their judgment not only by sales but by the eagerness of both Chatto & Windus and Faber & Faber to reprint the novels in 1931' (Willis, 1992, p. 156). The move is at once both elitist and democratic. John Young writes that 'By issuing the Uniform Editions as part of an expanding set [. . .] Hogarth fosters its consumers' desire to own an entire collection. "Virginia Woolf" the brand name thus becomes legible as both canonically and commercially significant' (Young, 2000, p. 238). Both types of significance occur at once and coexist even as they are in tension.

As the advertising was careful to continue the balancing-act between commerce and art, so too did the early circulation practices. The Press used elitist, aesthetic and historical elements to situate the practices. Rainey, in examining the institutions of modernist artistic production, discusses how Pound, Joyce and Eliot created a hybrid economic model: 'to reconstruct an aristocracy, but to do it within the world of the commodity – to accept, in other words, the status of art as a commodity, but simultaneously to transform it into a special kind of commodity, a rarity capable of sustaining investment value' (Rainey, 1998, p. 39). The Hogarth Press, especially in the early years, made some analogous types of negotiation between aristocratic and capitalist investment. In the early years of the Press, from 1919–1923, the Woolfs used subscription to sell their works. Unlike Rainey's examples, the investment was not only in 'art as commodity', where the consumption would be 'postpone[d] and sublimate[d] [. . .] by turning it into an object of investment whose value will be realized only in the future' (Rainey, 1998, p. 39), but also more directly into the institution of the Press. There was value in the books themselves, which, as previously discussed, share some similar characteristics with 'fine print' books, but there was also value in contributing to the institution that produced them.

There were two types or categories of subscribers: A or B. Type A subscribers paid a deposit and then received every publication that the Press produced. Type B subscribers were given notification of productions but chose which titles they wished to purchase. Subscription functions like a patron or patrons in some important ways, including providing financial stability for the Press, and prestige for the patrons. The prestige and status create desire for the texts among patrons and beyond. An A subscriber supported the Press as an institution presumably because of the art that it would produce. Subscription changes the dynamic of exchange between publisher and consumer. Category A subscribers' involvement was not based on a text by text case, or the individual authors of works. This relationship shifts the focus from the sale of objects to a more general support of an institution or project of supporting art, which increases the stability of income. Involvement is based not on 'retrospective consumption' but in 'prospective patronage' (Rainey, 1998, p. 65). Subscribing to the Hogarth Press was investing in the Woolfs, not as authors to support their own original literary productions directly, but as publishers, to help facilitate getting authors into print. The subscribers were not shareholders and had no share in direct profits, but they received the investment of the books, which did turn out to be economically profitable. Further, they had the status of being on the list from the start, demonstrating their foresight. There are also some similarities with little magazines of the time, which not only received support from patrons (Harriet Weaver of *The Egoist*), but also 'survived by a direct rapport with a restricted group of readers' that 'had typified literary magazines in the genteel tradition' (Rainey, 1998, p. 92). These magazines were for sale at only a few retail outlets and sold mostly to subscribers. A magazine subscription, however, resulted in fewer surprises in terms of products than a subscription to the Hogarth Press.

The Press and those supporting it also formed an elite, a group that required an 'invitation' to join and is fairly exclusive. Subscribers were 'addressed', initiated into a group, and they joined based on the reputation of the Press and/or the relation to the people who ran it. This is similar, in significant ways, to manuscript and coterie exchange where 'an aura of "privileged insidedness" [is created] around the text and its readers' and allows 'the right outsiders [to] become insiders' (Summit, 2000, p. 188). Subscription is also a more direct method of exchange, without the middlemen of booksellers, and increased contact between producer and consumer. The early circulation was largely among friends and acquaintances. Often the same people were buyers, reviewers and

authors, forming a community. The charge of insularity has often been levelled against Bloomsbury in general and, at times, against the Hogarth Press in particular.

The exclusivity, however, confers prestige on those who are included. Further, limiting participation through subscription can even be read as euphemistic advertising, creating desire for a product without that appearing to be the intention. In 1920, George Bernard Shaw wrote to Leonard and asked, 'Does the Hogarth Press publish any catalogues or season's lists? They seem to print some nice books; but I hear of them only by accident' (qtd. in Willis, 1992, p. 65). At this time people could not automatically get Hogarth Publications at any bookstore; it mattered whom one knew, and if one did not travel in circles of people who talked about the Press, one might not know of it or its products at all. If the circulation of texts is limited, texts become 'objects of elevated value and desire, in the way that Bourdieu defines "restricted circulation" as a marker of cultural value' (Summit, 2000, p. 189). Again, even after the Hogarth Press began distributing its books to bookstores in the more conventional way, the sense of their exclusivity lingered.

Advertising rhetoric and practices are complicated and contradictory. Perhaps it is better to say that the apparent contradictions are actually supplementary. The Press demonstrated an astute awareness of the discourses involved and what was at stake. Both Leonard and Virginia could use multiple discourses and types of appeal. The Press, like much of Virginia Woolf's writing, refused to be fixed or pinned, and used productive negotiations. A book can say one thing and do another. Negotiations and contradiction occurred as the Press was a publicising mechanism but privately owned; work was both professional and amateur, commercial and disinterested. These and other conflated binaries allowed for flexibility of rhetorical constructions and positioning within the field of cultural production.

Early Press practices, initiating the accrual of symbolic capital in the Hogarth Press brand, enabled *The Waves* to confer 'IT' status by 1931. What the Hogarth Press accomplished is remarkable. My purpose is not to diminish in any way the work of the Press or the value of what it created, but to show how the Press rhetorically and materially positioned itself in terms of contemporary and historical discourses in order to negotiate a delicate and uneasy balance between art and commerce. At times the material objects and practices contradict the official rhetoric, foregrounding the importance of the archive and material study, but even the official rhetoric of the Press is not stable. An oscillating and

complex position, such as the Hogarth Press inhabits, is flexible, multiple, at times contradictory, and certainly productive.

Notes

1. While the Press did not republish classics, they did publish a number of translations, especially of Russian authors, as well as the works of Freud. Also, Virginia Woolf's texts were reprinted. New books and unknown authors were marked with recognisably historical elements such as woodcuts or the marks of hand-printing that added a different type of value.
2. Even the 'facts' of the start of the Press offer examples illustrating the instability of textual transmission. There are, for example, discrepancies over the date of the press purchase, and the amount of initial capital investment.
3. For example, Vita Sackville-West's *The Edwardians,* published in May 1930, was first printed in a run of 18,000 copies with a second impression of 8,000 copies a month later and a further 3,000 in September (Woolmer, 1986, p. 86). In selling almost 30,000 copies in the first six months it was a bestseller.

8
'The Book is Still Warm': The Hogarth Press in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction

Drew Patrick Shannon

Beau Brummell and the allure of the signature

Beau Brummell, by Virginia Woolf, published in 1930 by the New York firm of Rimington and Hooper, limited to 550 copies, of which 500 were for sale, had been pulled, at my request, from the bowels of the stacks of the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County. The book was in poor condition, housed in a crumbling slipcase, its covers nearly separated from its spine. Opening the book, I swept my hand over the first, apparently blank, left-hand page. On second glance, I saw what my hand had brushed: Woolf's signature, in her favourite purple ink.

Immediately I began to worry that I might have inadvertently damaged the book, that the oils from my fingertips would surely begin some rapid process of decay in the old, certainly *not* acid-free paper. Nevertheless, I held the book for a long time, imagining Woolf before a fresh stack of this Rimington and Hooper edition, signing one copy after another. The book I held had been in her hands. Had she grown tired after signing copy 153? Had she paused for frequent breaks? Had her hand cramped? Where was she when she signed them? Years of immersion in Woolf's life and work had given me a vivid imaginative sense of her, and my mind conjured the images suggested by the book: her hands, the book, her pen, perhaps a cigarette in her left hand, or between her lips, as she scrawled her name again and again.[1] The book that was in my hands, which had once been in her hands, became more, in that moment, than just a book. It fairly glowed with additional life. I read the essay, which I had read before, but as if I had never read it before, because in a sense I had not. I had certainly never read it in this form, in this way, on large yellowed pages, in such a large font. Though I could read the essay at home, in its later incarnation as part of "Four

Figures" in Woolf's 1932 collection *The Second Common Reader*, I knew that from that point on, no other copy would do.

As the catalogue entry for *Beau Brummell* had not indicated that it was signed, I alerted the staff of the library that they had a signed Virginia Woolf floating freely among their stacks. It is now housed in their Rare Books Room. Should I wish to visit it again, I must wear white gloves.

Jeanette Winterson writes eloquently on the passion for book collecting in her essay "The Psychometry of Books":

> Book collecting is an obsession, a disease, an addiction, a fascination, an absurdity, a fate. It is not a hobby. Those who do it must do it. Those who do not do it, think of it as a cousin of stamp-collecting, a sister of the trophy cabinet, bastard of a sound bank account and a weak mind. Money you must have, although not necessarily in large quantities, but certainly in disposable amounts. What makes money disposable is a personal question. My first First Edition was bought courtesy of a plastic sheet nailed over a rotten window. The price of fitting a new frame and glass was the price of Robert Graves: *To Whom Else*? Seizan Press, 1931, hand-set, cover by Len Lye. (Winterson, 1996, p. 119)

But for the details, Winterson might be describing the passion for collecting paintings, sculptures, any object of art. There is the same ardour, the same sense of wonder, the same slight self-effacement. The same awe that I felt when confronted with *Beau Brummell* that hot afternoon. The book felt alive, original, touched by greatness.

The Waste Land: in Woolf's hands

A few months later, I examined the University of Cincinnati's collection of books from the Hogarth Press – properly, under the watchful eye of the Rare Books Room's curator. I held T. S. Eliot's *Poems* and *The Waste Land*, Theodora Bosanquet's *Henry James at Work*, Virginia's own *Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown*. As I gently turned the pages of *The Waste Land*, with its marbleised blue cover, I thought again of the book once being held in Virginia Woolf's hands, and of her assembling the book, gluing the title card onto the cover. As with *Beau Brummell*, I read *The Waste Land* there, feeling that despite the multiple editions I own of the poem and which I could read in the comfort of my own home, this was the ideal way to read Eliot's work, some sloppy inking notwithstanding. Donna Rhein reveals that some copies she examined of the Hogarth Press'

The Waste Land show Woolf's own handwritten corrections (Rhein, 1985, p. 23); the copy I saw unfortunately did not. It was the realisation that I found the lack of Woolf's corrections *unfortunate*, coupled with my reaction to *Beau Brummell* a few months earlier, that led me to think of Walter Benjamin. The Hogarth Press edition of *The Waste Land* appeared shortly after the work's first appearance in *The Dial*, *The Criterion* and the Boni and Liveright edition.[2] And yet, it is an original, a work of art in its own way, and a work of art quite apart from the content – an example of printing, bookbinding, design. But there was yet another layer: my own interest in Woolf, which did a great deal to invest *Beau Brummell* and the hand-printed Hogarth Press books with additional value and allure, once again apart from the books' content. In Benjamin's 1936 essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", he argues for two categories of art object – the original and the reproduction. But as I thought about the books touched by Woolf's hands, I began thinking of Benjamin's theory as a spectrum, with the original and the reproduction at the two opposing poles. Where, I wondered, do the hand-printed books from the Hogarth Press, in particular, fall? I would like to suggest that Benjamin's categories, at least as applied to books as art objects, might not be as static or fixed as the essay would lead us to believe, and that the Woolfs' productions on their small hand-press occupy a nebulous position in Benjamin's theory.

The cult of the original

In a series of fifteen brief 'chapters' (with a prologue and epilogue), Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" examines the effects of mechanical reproduction on the production and reception of art, with particular attention to the then fairly new art forms of photography and film. His thesis, that these technical developments have fundamentally changed not only the ways in which artists make art but the way the public views art, is linked to his observations about the politicisation of art, particularly by fascists. Benjamin proposes that in an age in which mass reproduction of works of art is possible, the work of art's aura is the first casualty, the aura being not necessarily a particular intrinsic feature of the work itself, but rather the manner in which the object is approached by the observer, due to its rarity, its originality, or something significant in its historical context, 'the unique phenomenon of a distance, however close [the object] may be' (Benjamin, 1968, p. 222). Reproduced art is 'detach[ed] from the domain of tradition' (Benjamin, 1968, p. 221), and thus we might assume that

an original is in some way a product of that tradition. For Benjamin, a Marxist, the loss of aura, with its association with cult value and religious ritual, is not a particularly lamentable situation, as he equates the cult appeal of originals with fascism, in that the fascistic attitude toward art is one of exclusion (only those elite, select few are allowed access to the work of art) or utilisation (art is to be used for manipulative political ends, like the Nazi propaganda films of Leni Riefenstahl). Mass reproducibility, on the other hand, is the great leveller, enabling art to be disseminated to the masses. As Benjamin puts it, '[F]or the first time in world history, mechanical reproduction emancipates the work of art from its parasitic dependence on ritual. To an ever greater degree, the work of art reproduced becomes the work of art designed for reproducibility' (Benjamin, 1968, p. 224). When Benjamin uses the phrase 'confronted with' (Benjamin, 1968, p. 223) in connection with aura, he reveals one of his major concerns: the viewers are confronted with the aura *as if* it is an aspect of the work itself, *as if* the aura is the product of the tradition rather than the tradition itself. Though "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" largely deals with cinema and photography, it can be argued that the printing press is the original mass reproducer of art, bringing the art of writing to the masses.

But while the press is certainly responsible for the democratisation of literature, there is nevertheless considerable cult value in the original handwritten manuscript, or the typescript, of a piece of writing. Just as an original painting inspires more awe in the observer than a poster reproduction (however fine the quality of the reproduction), an original handwritten volume of one of Virginia Woolf's diaries would, for the devotee, prove infinitely more valuable than a printed copy of Anne Olivier Bell's transcription, its wonderful notes and annotations notwithstanding.[3] The key difference is not in the content, which in the original and the reproduction are the same (at least theoretically, not taking into account mistakes in printing, typographical errors, and so on), but in the context surrounding the original, the knowledge on the part of the observer that the act of creation occurred *here*, that this is the site, to some extent, of the artist's creativity made manifest. (In the case of manuscripts, this idea is complicated by the fact that a printed copy of the book is not really the same as the manuscript – the manuscript is in the writer's hand, and might reveal all sorts of information to the observer that a typed and printed version could not, quite apart from the content.) Thus, there is perhaps a problem with using Benjamin's essay in a discussion of the art form of book production, because the spread of literature as we know it depends almost entirely on the

reproducibility of writing. Writing would appear to elude Benjamin's discussion of aura and mass production; indeed, he refers to the mass production of writing as a 'special' and 'important' case, but one that he does not feel the need to examine in detail (Benjamin, 1968, p. 219). When printing presses became readily available to those with the skill and the money, many writers began to publish themselves, as well as the work of friends, lovers, family members and acquaintances. Very often such books were labours of love; very often they did not turn a profit. Sometimes the print runs were small; sometimes such ventures took off and merged with larger firms.[4] William Morris at the Kelmscott Press and Roger Fry at the Omega Workshops often produced books in extremely limited numbers, at very high prices, for the 'fine book buyer' market (Willis, 1992, p. 10, p. 36). Such books are usually valued as art for their obvious beauty and scarcity. But what do we make of the products of small presses with limited print runs, intended for the general public, with books that were functional in design but which still retained an originality in their paper, their covers, their look?

If we consider art as being either material or immaterial (a term which is important, as will be seen, in Leonard Woolf's own description of the origins and intent of the Hogarth Press), then Benjamin's essay becomes more applicable. In this discussion, I do not attend to the immaterial *content* of the hand-printed books from the Hogarth Press, but focus instead on their materiality, their purely physical and aesthetic qualities. It seems clear that there are few situations in which people can observe or utilise a text of which there is only one copy, or few; a Gutenberg Bible is justly seen as an art object due to its scarcity and craftsmanship, but this is not a text that is used or read. Housed safely, for instance, in the Morgan Library in New York City, it is certainly not handled by the masses. Similarly, but on a lower plane, a first edition of a novel might not be substantially different textually from thousands of mass market paperback reprintings, and yet it is the rarity of the physical object, not the immaterial content, that inspires awe (in the Benjaminian sense) in the eye of a particular kind of knowledgeable beholder. The first edition may, for various reasons, be seen as an art object quite apart from the availability of any perfectly viable reprintings.

Jeannette Winterson appears to acknowledge Benjamin's categories of art objects in her discussion of the merits of first editions:

> What is the relationship between the inner and outer? Between the text and its context? Why a signed First Edition and not a Penguin Classic?

> The prosaic answer, the answer of the investor, would be bibliographical; that many of the now recognized classics, not having been recognized as classics at the time of their printing, were issued singly or separately, if they were poems, and in extremely limited or private press editions in the case of both poetry and prose. Such editions are beautiful even at their most workmanlike. They are a durable pleasure. They are, without any self-consciousness, what The Folio Society and its kind would like to be. They are worth possessing in their own right. They are original just as the texts they wrap are original. The making of a book and the creating of a book come together only once in the history of a book. The text will transcend its time, the wrapper and the binding and the paper and the ink and the signature and the dedication can't. All that is caught (or lost) at a single moment. All that becomes a reminder, a museum, a backwards eye into a forgotten place. As historical objects, as antiques, First Editions have all the virtues necessary to a collector; archival interest, market value, display, rarity, temptation.
>
> For the lover, who collects in order to keep the beloved ever by her side, there is more than virtue, there is passion. (Winterson, 1996, pp. 120–1)

While it seems clear that a book may, in its material sense, qualify as an art object in Benjamin's theory, the matter is complicated by two separate but related points: Can an object that is manufactured almost entirely by means of a mechanical apparatus ever be considered an original work of art, and can an object that is meant by its creators to be a cheap means of disseminating information to a public (that is, an object whose immaterial content is to be prized over its material form) have its intended function reversed, to become, ultimately, a work of art valued for its form rather than its content? To answer these questions, we must look at the Hogarth Press in context, and examine its intended function in the marketplace.

'The immaterial inside of a book'

On her birthday in 1915, Leonard Woolf took Virginia to London, where

> [s]itting at tea we decided three things: in the first place, to take Hogarth [House], if we can get it; in the second, to buy a Printing press; in the third to buy a Bull dog, probably called John. I am very

> much excited by the idea of all three – particularly the press. I was also given a packet of sweets to bring home. (*D*1, p. 28)

Both the lease on Hogarth House in Richmond and the printing press came to fruition; John the bulldog never materialised. The decision to purchase the hand-press was not, in all likelihood, the result solely of this tea-table conversation; as has become the stuff of Bloomsbury legend, Leonard believed that setting type might provide Virginia with a soothing occupation, something for her to do with her hands (Lee, 1996, p. 362). By early 1915 Leonard, having been married to Virginia for two and a half years, had helped her through breakdowns and a suicide attempt; another breakdown soon after the above diary entry resulted in the postponement of the purchase of the press until 1917. Upon its arrival, the Woolfs installed it on their drawing room table, where it would remain for the duration of their stay at Hogarth House (Q. Bell, 1972, p. 41). Upon their return to London in 1924, while Woolf was writing *Mrs. Dalloway*, the Press occupied the 'semi-basement' at 52 Tavistock Square (Lehmann, 1978, pp. 8–9), where the Woolfs kept a staff that was often at odds with Leonard. At first, the Woolfs were inept as printers; unable to take printing lessons due to 'labor regulations regarding trades' (Rhein, 1985, p. 4), they chose to teach themselves by means of the instruction manual that came with the hand-press. Leonard's hands shook due to a nervous condition, and thus it fell to Virginia to set the type. When the press arrived, she promptly lost some of the letters in the drawing room carpet and 'managed, almost at once, to get the lower case h's mixed with the n's' (Q. Bell, 1972, p. 41).

The Woolfs' frequent mistakes and apparently lackadaisical attitude toward quality control are well documented: among the more famous printing *faux pas* are errors in the running head of a Katherine Mansfield story ("The Prelude" rather than "Prelude", with the offending pages not being corrected once the error was noted); Leonard crossing out Laura Riding's married name with black bars rather than printing out a new title page; 'campion' for 'champion' in Virginia's own *On Being Ill*, to note one of the many misspellings and typographical errors; and many instances of poor inking, awkward typography, skewed spacing (Rosenbaum, 1998, pp. 152–3, pp. 156–7). But such apparent sloppiness and disinterest actually lies at the heart of the Woolfs' proposition, and, as S. P. Rosenbaum notes, is the key, ironically, both to the Press's longevity and its success.

The 1922 Hogarth Press fifth anniversary statement is revealing for the light it sheds on the Woolfs' intentions for their business venture.

It claims that it was the plan not to 'embellish our books beyond what is necessary for ease of reading and decency of appearance', and that 'cheapness and adequacy', not 'high prices and typographical splendour' were the goals (qtd. in Rosenbaum, 1998, p. 152). Further, Leonard Woolf elaborates in his autobiography that he and Virginia did not wish to print 'fine' books.

> We were interested primarily in the immaterial inside of a book, what the author had to say and how he said it; we had drifted into the business with the idea of publishing things which the commercial publisher could not or would not publish. We wanted our books to 'look nice' and we had our own views of what nice looks in a book would be, but neither of us was interested in fine printing and fine binding. (L. Woolf, 1967, p. 80)

From the outset, then, the Hogarth Press was to privilege content over form. Even if the Woolfs had had the interest in fine printing, they had not, as Rosenbaum notes, the means: they started the enterprise with virtually no capital (Rosenbaum, 1998, p. 154). Rosenbaum suggests that this lack of funding, with the subsequent lack of a large staff, freed the Woolfs to follow their own interests; Leonard's often 'tyrannical' hold of the Press's reins, however unpleasant for the employees, kept the business afloat (Rosenbaum, 1998, p. 155).

For Virginia, the work at the Press may have harkened back to an activity from her youth: bookbinding. In 1901, she had lessons in bookbinding from Sylvia Stebbing, who worked in Museum Street, Bloomsbury; the activity was one that she shared with her cousin, Emma Vaughan, but the lessons cannot be said to have 'constituted a formal course of instruction' (Isaac, 2000, p. 9). Nevertheless, the lessons certainly made an impression, for she later took great interest in the papers and covers used at the Hogarth Press; Leonard notes that the blank volumes she used for her professional and diary writing were covered with 'coloured, patterned Italian papers which we frequently used for binding books of poetry published by us in The Hogarth Press and of which she was very fond' (*WD*, p. vii). It is somehow fitting that these lessons, which would indirectly effect this later occupation, should take place in the neighbourhood which would be so closely linked with the flowering of her creativity, the examples of which would issue forth from the Hogarth Press.

By the standards of their author list alone, the Hogarth Press was almost at once a success: among the Press authors were T. S. Eliot,

E. M. Forster, Clive Bell, George Rylands, Vita Sackville-West, Nancy Cunard and Robert Graves (Willis, 1992, pp. 21–42). The Woolfs often turned work down due to either extreme length or complexity; they famously declined Sylvia Beach's offer to publish Joyce's *Ulysses*, fearing both the problems of typesetting the long and complex work and the likelihood of lawsuits for obscenity. Virginia noted in her diary, after she read the manuscript: 'Genius it has I think, but of the inferior water' (*D*2, p. 199). When the manuscripts they did accept were too long to be printed on their hand-press and bound in their home, the Woolfs farmed out the job to local professional printers, who bound the books under the Hogarth Press imprint.

As has been often noted, one of the most significant effects of the Press was the release it gave Virginia in her writing. Her first two novels (*The Voyage Out* (1915) and *Night and Day* (1919)) were published by Duckworth, the firm established by her half-brother, who has become notorious for his sexual interference with Virginia when she was a child. The freedom of her own press allowed Virginia to write what she chose, and not have to worry about Duckworth's reaction to experimental work. She and Leonard promptly printed their own work as the first Hogarth Press publication: in *Two Stories* (1917), which contains Leonard's "Three Jews" and Virginia's "The Mark on the Wall", Virginia began the formal experimentation that would be the hallmark of her mature work. Soon after, the Hogarth Press published Virginia's "Kew Gardens", another experimental short story, which was a watershed moment – her next major work was the experimental novel *Jacob's Room* (1922), the book that signalled her new direction as a modernist. On 22 September 1925, she noted in her diary that thanks to the Press, she was 'the only woman in England free to write what I like' (*D*3, p. 43). Mark Hussey notes that as soon as Woolf became a printer, 'she became concerned not only with the sound of her words, but also with their visual display on the page' (Hussey, 2000, p. 253).[5]

The establishment of the Hogarth Press can obviously also be viewed as an economic and political act for the Woolfs. According to Sonita Sarker, Woolf used the technology and machinery of the Hogarth Press in order to read a wider audience for her feminist polemics *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and *Three Guineas* (1938), both of which, tellingly, appeared only after Woolf had the power to print her own work without fear of censorship (Sarker, 2000, p. 40). In addition, the Press published work by Leonard on the League of Nations as well as the works of somewhat 'radical' writers opposed to imperialism in Africa and India (Sarker, 2000, p. 46). And finally, of course, the Press existed

to provide the Woolfs with an income, a way to avoid dependence on others. Leonard's autobiography proudly declares that the Press was a successful business, at one point earning them £1000 per year (L. Woolf, 1969, p. 49, p. 101). As Virginia famously states in *A Room of One's Own*, a woman must have £500 a year and a room of her own, 'if she is to write fiction' (*AROO*, p. 4). She was rather consistently preoccupied with money (Garrity, 2000, p. 196); her diaries are full of references to it. And while the Press often lost money on certain titles, it certainly helped to keep them solvent, and before long, they were considered a force to be reckoned with in the world of English publishing.

'Art is indifferent to time'

It is difficult to arrive at a definitive conclusion as to whether the Woolfs were more interested in art or commerce; the more interesting question is what sort of bearing their intention has upon their hand-printed books' position in Benjamin's theory. Leonard generally seems to focus more on the financial aspects of the Press in his personal writings, while Virginia records the technical joys and irritations of the mechanical printing process, as well as the books' immaterial content. On occasion, she comments on the appearance of the books; there is a famous argument between her and Vanessa over the printing of the first edition of *Kew Gardens* in 1919: Vanessa, annoyed over the poor job, says that she will never illustrate 'any more stories of mine under those conditions, & went so far as to doubt the value of the Hogarth Press altogether. An ordinary printer would do better in her opinion. This both stung & chilled me' (*D*1, p. 279). The Woolfs more frequently look at their work as products, and not as individual works of art. But Benjamin would seem to suggest that the intention of the creator of the object is almost secondary to the manner in which that object is received. For despite the fact that the Woolfs may have intended their work to be a pure dissemination of the immaterial content of the book, even at the time there was a certain cachet to owning one of the hand-printed books from the Hogarth Press. The Woolfs sold many of their books on a subscription basis; many of the buyers were friends or relatives, individuals who were surely buying the books out of a combination of interest and affection. The allure of the hand-printed books to the Woolfs' contemporary purchasers may have been somehow related to the Arts and Crafts movement, the desire for something handmade and personal.[6] And the Woolfs often attempted no uniformity in their texts: some copies in the same print run have differently coloured

covers; some have differently shaped or designed title cards, lending an air of originality even to individual works in a run. Though many of the purchasers were friends and acquaintances, there was undoubtedly some appeal for many other readers to owning a book that had been put together by hand by Leonard and Virginia Woolf; the latter, after all, was a novelist and critic with a burgeoning reputation. J. H. Willis, Jr. notes an instance in which Virginia wrote to Vanessa about a visit to Bain the bookseller at Harold Monro's Poetry Workshop: '"Mrs. Woolf," he said, "so long as you print things yourself I can guarantee you an immediate sale and high prices; but when you have books printed for you, its [*sic*] a very different matter." "But you see, Mr. Bain," I said, "my taste is very bad." "It's not a question of taste, Madam," he replied; "It's the personal touch"' (*L*2, p. 378). Finally, the knowledge of the time and skill involved in setting type, inking the press, printing the pages, and binding the books must have given the original purchasers some sense that they were buying something that was crafted and handmade, not something that was merely stamped out on a machine. As Virginia became more famous she and Leonard stopped producing hand-printed books,[7] thus giving the earlier volumes an even greater value – a value that moves away from exhibition and more toward cult.

If we can think of Benjamin's theory as a spectrum, with 'original' at one end and 'reproduction' at the other, then it is after Virginia Woolf's death in 1941 that the hand-printed books begin to shift further along toward 'originality'. As Regina Marler notes in *Bloomsbury Pie: The Making of the Bloomsbury Boom*, Leonard kept Virginia before the reading public in the years after her death with carefully-timed volumes of essays; while she was considered a brilliant essayist, interest in her novels waned, though Leonard kept them in print (Marler, 1997, pp. 22–4). Through the 1970s, with the publication of Quentin Bell's biography and Virginia's own letters and diaries, Woolf's reputation grew, her novels regained their stature, and she was swept up in the burgeoning feminist movement. As Woolf's literary stock rose, the demand increased for the ever-diminishing number of objects owned or touched by her. There is a possible analogue to the development of Woolf's reputation in Benjamin's essay when he argues that Hollywood studios specifically generate the cult of the movie star in order to compensate for the lack of aura in their mass-produced products (Benjamin, 1968, p. 231). Although Leonard was extremely protective of Woolf's literary legacy (refusing to allow access to certain private papers, and so on), there is still a sense in which Leonard manipulated, in a mainly positive way, Virginia's image in the years following her death. By keeping the

flame alive, he (possibly inadvertently) paved the way for the cult value of the hand-printed Hogarth Press books, Woolf first editions, signed books, and other forms of memorabilia to thrive. This fastidious care on Leonard's part, coupled with the growing number of articles and essays on Woolf's work throughout the 1960s and 70s, not to mention the effect of Edward Albee, so astutely examined by Brenda Silver in *Virginia Woolf Icon*, served to create a context and a tradition through which to view Woolf's life and literary activity. And for the hand-printed books from the Hogarth Press, exhibition value has given way to cult value. A Hogarth Press *The Waste Land* now has aura, in the Benjaminian sense. 'We know that the earliest art works originated in the service of a ritual – first the magical, then the religious kind. It is significant that the existence of the work of art with reference to its aura is never entirely separated from its ritual function' (Benjamin, 1968, pp. 223–4). There is something ritualistic about holding a hand-printed Hogarth Press book. To hold it is to imagine Woolf gluing the title card, working the stitching, gluing the covers. The impulse to own one, or even to visit one in a library, is not unlike the impulse to visit Monks House, to take the walk to the River Ouse. There is a similar sense of pilgrimage, of being close to greatness.

It is important to note that for Benjamin, the cult of celebrity and the cult value of an art object are not precisely the same thing, though they are no doubt related. In this instance, it can argued that the cult of celebrity around Virginia Woolf has created a context, a tradition, through which the Hogarth Press hand-printed books may be viewed, thus imbuing them with aura. But this aura, as with all of Benjamin's art objects, is not intrinsic to the books themselves – it is a product of the viewpoint of the observer. An observer who knows nothing of Woolf might look at an old copy of Eliot's *Poems* and think that it is merely a sloppy, rundown, amateurish publication, while the Woolfian will look at it with reverence. The same can be said of any painting in any museum – the observer is told that a particular art object is an original, is of value, and the observer views the object through that lens. The same painting in a different venue – frameless, propped up against a wall (or used as a fire screen, as I was horrified to learn of one of Roger Fry's paintings (Marler, 1997, p. 55)) – might garner an entirely different response, out of its particular context and tradition. I am quite aware that my own reverence for these books would, for Benjamin, lean toward the fascistic impulse that he warns against early in his essay. Original art objects, those with aura, are dangerous, in that they suggest elitism, a non-democratic impulse. But since in this instance, a copy of

the Hogarth Press *The Waste Land* does not negate the fact that there are millions of copies of other editions throughout the world available to the masses, one might wonder where the harm is in such reverence. But that is too large a topic to be addressed here.

On the surface, Benjamin's categories of art objects appear stable and fixed, but the hand-printed books from the Hogarth Press indicate that what was previously thought of as a reproduction may take on the qualities of an original, with the passage of time and the development of a new context through which to observe them. Perhaps it is again Jeanette Winterson who most accurately describes what it is like to hold a book once held by the great:

> Close the shutters and turn up the lamp. The room is full of voices. Who are they that shine in gold like apostles in a church window at midday? There is more in my hands than a book. Pick it up, and the streets empty of traffic, the place is still. The movement is an imaginative one, the secret passage between body and book, the connections known only to you. Intimate illuminations when the reader and what is read are both unaware of the hands of the clock.
>
> The clock is ticking. Let it. In your hands, a book that was in their hands, passed to you across the negligible years of time. Art is indifferent to time, and if you still want proof, you have it. Pick up the book. It is still warm. (Winterson, 1996, pp. 131–2)

Notes

1. It would appear that Woolf thought little of the finished product: her sole mention of this edition appears in a letter to Vita Sackville-West; after saying that she is sending Vita a copy, she calls it 'a wretched little book, another old essay, meant for America only; so hide it, and say nothing' (*L*4, p. 248). This could be attributed to Woolf's self-effacement with Sackville-West; she once sent Vita a dummy copy of *To the Lighthouse*, its pages completely blank, with a note calling it 'my best book' (*L*3, p. 372).
2. See Michael North's "Note on the Text" of the Norton Critical Edition of Eliot's *The Waste Land* for a concise publication history of the poem, pages xi–xiii.
3. The Berg Collection of the New York Public Library, where many of Woolf's manuscripts are housed, severely restricts access to these originals, for the obvious reason that the frequent handling caused substantial wear and tear. Their position now is not unlike that of a painting in a museum, but more isolated – while the museum accepts many visitors, the Berg requires a letter of introduction from a prominent scholar for admission to the archive. This, of course, only promotes a greater tradition within which the diary manuscripts can exist, and a corresponding increase in cult value.

4. As the Hogarth Press did, in 1946, when it was acquired by Chatto and Windus. See Leonard Woolf, *The Journey Not the Arrival Matters*: *An Autobiography of the Years 1939 to 1969*, 112ff.
5. The second edition of *Kew Gardens*, with the borders of the pages decorated by Woolf's sister Vanessa Bell, supports Hussey's assertion that Woolf paid great attention to the physical forms and shapes that her words would take – in this edition, her words are spaced so as not to interfere with, and in fact to complement, the Bell designs, so that if one were not certain of the composition history, it would be difficult to determine which came first: the text or the decorations.
6. It is difficult to argue that the longer works that were 'outsourced' to printers like McDermott's Prompt Press are original works of art – they emphatically seem like reproductions in terms of their sheer number and the swiftness of their reproducibility.
7. The last book the Woolfs hand-printed was Dorothy Wellesley's *Jupiter and the Nun* in 1932 (Rhein, 1985, p. 152).

9
Conversations in Bloomsbury: Colonial Writers and the Hogarth Press

Anna Snaith

In her recent book, *Hearts of Darkness: White Women Write Race*, Jane Marcus calls for the Indian writer Mulk Raj Anand (1905–2004) to be brought 'back to Bloomsbury' (J. Marcus, 2004, p. 5), where he lived and worked from the mid-1920s to the mid-1940s. Recently, critics have begun to investigate Anand's position in the leftist circles of interwar London, but not specifically his interactions with the Woolfs and the Hogarth Press.[1] Anand was not the only colonial writer to be involved with the Press; the Trinidadian, Marxist, historian and cultural critic Cyril Lionel Robert James (1901–1989), on his 'voyage in', made his first stop at Bloomsbury, published with the Hogarth Press, and was keen to prove himself equal to the intellectual debate synonymous with the area's artistic communities. The position of these two colonial intellectuals in London – both polymaths and radicals – emphasises the metropolis' role as a crucible of anti-colonial politics. In particular, the Hogarth Press was a key disseminator of anti-colonial thought in the interwar period, suggesting an alternative take on its role as a facilitator of international modernism. James' and Anand's collaborations with the Woolfs typify the conflicted yet transformative exchanges which occurred between colonial and British writers in modernist London. However, British modernist art's implication in cultural imperialism, and those definitions of modernity founded on various kinds of racial hierarchies, complicate intersections between British and colonial writers. As Simon Gikandi has written, 'modernism sought energies in the strangeness and distance of the other but it could only bring this other back in the terms that seemed to fit into its essentially Eurocentric framework' (Gikandi, 2005, p. 49).

The impact of colonialism on British metropolitan modernism is not simply about spatial disruption, the influx of artifacts into the

metropolis, or artistic sampling (although these are of course pertinent), but also about the physical presence of colonial intellectuals, interacting in a wide variety of literary and political networks which invariably altered the trajectory of their activism as well as their fictional and non-fictional writing. In this period of transitional imperial relations, it is often those encounters with metropolitan individuals, and their political and artistic attitudes, which galvanise the drive towards the postcolonial in intellectuals such as James and Anand. These conjunctions can be simultaneously sustaining and inhibiting, in that their creative fuel derives from antagonism. More specifically, the 'conversations in Bloomsbury' had by Anand and James, both Marxists and anti-imperialists, demonstrate the multifariousness of anti-colonial resistance in the 1920s and 30s. Both Anand and James saw negotiations with Bloomsbury – the geographical area, the avant garde literary culture and the leftist Bloomsbury Group itself – as key to their arrival in London, suggesting the term's international significance. Bloomsbury clearly circulated in colonial sites, signifying not the canonical versions of British literary tradition central to cultural imperialism, but a Britishness to do with bohemian modernity.[2]

Work on the Woolfs and empire has been late in coming. To quote Jeanette McVicker, 'as a white, English, middle-class, feminist, bi-sexual, socialist, pacifist, anti-fascist, anti-imperialist writer she [Virginia Woolf], sometimes by default and sometimes by choice, was *also* a proud inheritor of the English literary tradition, a beneficiary of the British Empire's imperialist practices, and an enabler of its *civilizing mission*, however unevenly' (McVicker, 2007, p. 211). For this reason critics have varied in the extent of their indictment of Woolf. Early postcolonial readings found a thoroughgoing anti-imperialism in Woolf's oeuvre,[3] while later work has been more insistent on qualifying her anti-colonial politics. She came at the topic of empire via anti-patriarchal and anti-fascist concerns, therefore her anti-imperalism focuses on the systems and discourses (educational, sexual, familial, cultural) through which imperialism is constructed and perpetuated.

> Woolf always challenges the master narratives of patriarchy and British imperialism, but she does not additionally trouble England's representations of the world outside itself. And because her anti-imperialism does not manifest itself through claims about racial or cultural equality, Woolf's novels often reproduce a wide range of assumptions about nonwhite otherness as well as inscribe tropes of racial differences onto white English identity. (Seshagiri, 2004, p. 60)

Her treatment of empire is undoubtedly subtle and sustained, as seen for example in her representation of imperial trade networks and the erasure of labour in "The Docks of London", the links she makes between colonial and familial rebellion in the case of Ireland in *The Years*, the deconstruction of the spectacle of empire in "Thunder at Wembley", but the voices of those being oppressed by these systems are not heard.[4] So too, Leonard's constant advocacy of colonial independence, both in print and in his capacity as an advisor for the Labour Party on its Imperial Committee during the inter-war period, has not received the attention it deserves. Victoria Glendinning's recent biography of Leonard Woolf fails to illuminate this aspect of his political career, or the involvement of his wife in these projects and publications. The origin of his political position in his work as a colonial administrator in Ceylon – a taint on the 'purity' of his later support for decolonisation – is symptomatic of the reasons behind the slow emergence of work on modernism and empire more generally. As Anuradha Dingwaney Needham has recently argued, our desire for 'resistance to occupy an absolutely autonomous, uncontaminated space from which to launch the "truth" of its "pure" opposition to the West' overlooks or dismisses 'those articulations of resistance that emphasize the multilayered, mixed, or hybrid cultural and historical formations' (Needham, 2000, p. 28), such as James' essentially British public school education or Anand's experience as a doctoral student at University College London working on British empiricist philosophy. Both James and Anand were as keen to sample and prove themselves within the literary culture of Bloomsbury as they were to resist it. Neither was that ambivalence lasting; it was a catalyst for radicalisation, paralleled by concurrent changes in colonial power relations. The complexities of Woolf's own position in class and gender terms, as outlined in *Three Guineas*, mirror the ways in which Anand and James conceived of their outsider/insider status in their early years in Britain, something Anand was quick to recognise in his encounters with her.

Both Anand and James were prolific intellectuals, engaged in a wide range of political and publishing endeavours, but after setting up pertinent contexts for their early years in Britian, I want to focus on James' *Letters from London* (1932; 2003) and Anand's *Conversations in Bloomsbury* (1981). In these autobiographical essay collections they write about their position as newcomers in London, and specifically their engagement with Bloomsbury and its highbrow literary culture. I will then focus on their involvement with the Hogarth Press, and its place at the shifting intersections of anti-colonial thought, modernity and literary culture in the modernist period.

Cultural and political contexts for the 'voyage in'

C. L. R. James came to London in March 1932 from Trinidad. He spent several weeks living in Heathcote Street, Bloomsbury, before travelling north to Lancashire to stay with the black cricketer, Learie Constantine. While in Bloomsbury he wrote six articles for the *Port of Spain Gazette*, re-published recently as *Letters from London*. Two of these essays are about Bloomsbury, originally published untitled in Trinidad on 21 and 22 June 1932.[5] James travelled to Britain with two manuscripts, one for a novel, *Minty Alley*, published by Secker and Warburg in 1936, and the other a biography of the Trinidadian Labour leader and Mayor of Port of Spain, Captain André Cipriani, an ardent campaigner for self-government. This was published as the *Life of Captain Cipriani: An Account of British Government in the West Indies* in 1932 by a small northern press. Leonard Woolf then asked James to abridge it for publication by the Hogarth Press (Dhondy, 2001, p. 49). It is likely that James' contact with Leonard Woolf came through the Fabian and campaigner for colonial self-government, Lord Sydney Haldane Olivier, governor of Jamaica from 1907 to 1913, and a friend of the Woolfs, particularly in the early 1930s.[6] James quotes Olivier in *The Case for West Indian Self-Government* (James, 1992, pp. 49–50; see also Howe, 1993, p. 100), and the Press published Olivier's *The Myth of Governor Eyre*, about Eyre's brutal tactics in suppressing the 1865 uprising in Jamaica, alongside *The Case* in 1933 (Woolmer, 1986, p. 114). 1200 copies of *The Case for West Indian Self-Government* were published in 1933 as No. 16 in the Woolfs' *Day to Day* political pamphlet series started in 1930 (Woolmer, 1986, p. 113). James had in effect separated the polemic from the biography to suit a British readership.

James' Marxism and anti-colonialism became steadily more radical as a result of his time with Constantine in the Lancashire mill town of Nelson, his involvement with the Independent Labour Party and Trotskyism in the mid-30s, [7] and his collaborations with Trinidadian George Padmore in London in mid-1930s. But it was the invasion of Abyssinia by Mussolini in 1936, which consolidated his pan-Africanism and developed his ideas on the relationship between revolutionary politics and anti-colonialism. This just as the Comintern were speaking out against anti-colonial activity. [8] James was chairman of the International African Friends of Abyssinia (later to become the International African Service Bureau), formed to support Ethiopia in the fight against imperialism.[9] James continued to support organisations ranged across the political spectrum, however. He served, for example, on the executive

committee of the fairly moderate League of Coloured Peoples led by Jamaican doctor Harold Moody, and contributed to their journal, *The Keys*, writing specifically on the invasion of Abyssinia.[10]

Mulk Raj Anand came to London in 1925, living initially in Burton Street, and then Little Russell Street, Bloomsbury, as a voluntary exile after his arrest for nationalist agitation in India.[11] He quickly became involved in a wide variety of leftist literary networks. While a Ph.D. student in philosophy at University College London he opposed students involved in strike-breaking during the 1926 General Strike and was to write later: 'the Strike of 1926 had shown me categorically that Britain was organized and run in the interests of a small minority which could suppress the majority as violently at home as it did in the Empire' (Anand, 1975, pp. 58–9 and p. 64). Associated with the 'Leaning Tower' scene in the 1930s, Anand represented India at the International Writer's Conference Against Fascism in 1935 and volunteered briefly for the International Brigade until he was given a post reporting for the Communist Party from Madrid (Bluemel, 2004, p. 82).[12] Both Anand and James contributed to Nancy Cunard's *Authors Take Sides*.[13] Anand was instrumental in the founding of the All-India Progressive Writers' Union in London in 1935, an organisation committed to social reform through social realism (Innes, 2002, pp. 219–20).[14] Like James, his experiences in London fused a closer relationship between his socialism and his anti-imperialism.

Ideological conflict caused him to refuse a job at the BBC's Indian Section in 1939 and indicates the divided position he occupied in London, split between his anti-fascism and his Indian nationalism.[15] Later, however, his friendship with Orwell, and Russia entering the war on the Allied side, led him to do a substantial amount of freelance BBC work. This included drafting programmes for and participating in five installments of Orwell's wartime, six-part, radio poetry magazine, *Voice*, in particular a broadcast on the "Oriental Influence on English Literature" with T. S. Eliot, Venu Chitale, M. J. Tambimuttu, Una Marson and William Empson.[16] This programme, with readings by young poets from their own work, was a radical departure for the BBC.[17] Anand read "First Jasmines" by Tagore for "Voice 3"; and it is likely that he read passages from "The Secrets of the Self?" by his mentor Sheikh Muhammed Iqbal on "Voice 5", although the script has not survived (Orwell, 1998, p. 211). The series sought to expose young writers, but its home in the Eastern Service meant that many of the contributors were colonial writers.[18] Broadcasts on the Eastern Service, such as E. M. Forster's on modern Indian writing, were instrumental

in publicising writing by Anand and other English-language, Indian writers (Orwell, 1985, pp. 187–8). While colonial contributors often felt compromised by their complicity with wartime propaganda, the BBC nevertheless provided essential political and social networks for Indian and West Indian artists and intellectuals in London.[19]

Anand reviewed for *The Criterion* between 1928 and 1930, and worked as a proof-corrector at the Hogarth Press (probably in 1927) two afternoons a week (Marler, 1997, p. 135). It appears that Anand was working unpaid at the Hogarth Press as there is no record of him in the Hogarth Press archives.[20] He later published with the Hogarth Press, his stories "The Barber's Trade Union" and "Duty" appearing in Lehmann's *New Writing* series in 1936 and 1938.[21] In 1928 he started his first novel, *Untouchable*, about the life of an Indian sweep and latrine cleaner, and it was eventually published in 1935 by Wishart with an introduction by his friend E. M. Forster, after rejections from nineteen publishers. Anand recalls an early impetus for the novel: a comment made by Edward Sackville-West during a party at Virginia Woolf's that 'there can be no tragic writing about the poor. You can only laugh at them'. Anand continues:

> at that time I was writing the story of an untouchable boy. But I was so shocked by this dictum that I left my studies and went back to Gandhi's Ashram, to learn to be myself. Well, fortunately for me, Gandhi disrobed me of my corduroy suits and necktie and suede shoes. (Anand, 1989, p. 197)[22]

That disrobing occurred as much in Bloomsbury as in India. *Untouchable* ends with 'Simla – ss Viceroy of India – Bloomsbury' (1933), indicating Anand's investment in and identification with this particular area of London, as well as the lines of geographical and metaphorical movement which symbolise the connections and conflicts that fuelled his writing in this period.[23]

In comparing these two intellectuals, it is important to make distinctions between the place of Indians and West Indians in interwar London. Indian nationalism clearly had a much higher profile in Britain than, for example, the late 1930s riots in the West Indies, and the population of Indians in London was significantly higher than that of West Indians. Also Anand's self-proclaimed, Marxist humanism is very different from James' 'pan-African socialist nationalism' (Howe, 1993, p. 85). Certainly, then, Anand's politics and cultural background allowed him easier access to the networks of modernist London, but both clearly felt

that to conduct literal and textual conversations with Bloomsbury was part of their initiation process in the metropolis.

James, *Letters from London*, and Bloomsbury

C. L. R. James' essay "The Bloomsbury Atmosphere" documents his 'own impression' of a lecture by Edith Sitwell at the Student Movement House in Russell Square, which he describes as 'a club for London students, white and coloured, but with its chief aim giving coloured students in London an opportunity to meet together' (James, 2003, p. 44). The incident is heavy with signification: Sitwell represents the 'modern school' (James, 2003, p. 44); the occasion typifies Bloomsbury and its atmosphere. Bill Schwarz has talked of James occupying a 'low Bloomsbury' (Schwarz, 2003, p. 1), geographically proximate yet symbolically distant from the drawing rooms of Gordon Square, yet James' account of the evening suggests that his contributions are made in the name of highbrow literary culture. For example, Sitwell refers enigmatically at one point to a young American writer whose work rivals Lawrence, and James supplies the audience with Faulkner's name. He has what he calls an 'argument' with Sitwell about the relationship between talent and experimentation and after the talk surprises her with the name of an obscure composer to whom she referred. As he writes in *Beyond a Boundary*, 'in March 1932 I boarded the boat for Plymouth. I was about to enter the arena where I was to play the role for which I had prepared myself. The British intellectual was going to Britain' (James, 1994, p. 111). Britain was 'the source of all light and leading' (James, 1994, p. 30), Bloomsbury was the prime site of literary modernity, and James showed himself up to the job. The essay ends by celebrating the values of intellectualism and open debate found so readily in Bloomsbury (James, 2003, p. 47), but James' urgency to prove himself implicitly suggests fear that his West Indian identity might preclude him from such debate. His racial and national identity goes unmentioned, but the emphasis on Sitwell's surprise at his contributions belies a suspicion that her shock stems from a perceived mismatch between his blackness and his cultural capital. The essay segues between James' gratitude to various scholars who correspond with him and great confidence in his own intelligence, education and Britishness ('I had educated myself into a member of the British middle class with literary gifts' (James, 1994, p. 32)). As Bill Schwarz has argued: 'he came to Britain already convinced of his own cultural superiority [. . .] He imagined himself not black, but British' (Schwarz, 2003, p. 6).

In the second of his essays for the *Gazette*, "Bloomsbury Again", a fast-paced account of the 'intellectual ferment' of the area, James presents a cosmopolitan site of political and cultural interaction (James, 2003, p. 54). He meets Indian nationalists, a West African student who 'reads a volume of Proust at a sitting' (James, 2003, p. 42), and discusses fascism, Tagore and Pirandello. The text is peppered with references to high art and topical political debate. Of course, James is writing for a Trinidadian audience, and having to prove himself back home, but he depicts a 'natural' alliance with this admittedly 'highly artificial' lifestyle (James, 2003, p. 52): 'both by instinct and by training I belong to it and have fit into it as naturally as a pencil fits into a sharpener' (James, 2003, p. 54).

But these essays must be placed in the context of the manuscript he had in his suitcase and which would be published by the Hogarth Press the next year: *The Case for West Indian Self-Government*. While seemingly incongruous – the desire for cultural assimilation in his Bloomsbury essay and this document of cultural nationalism – James' performance in Bloomsbury underlines his argument in the *Case for West Indian Self Government*: 'cut off from all contact with Africa [. . .] they present today the extraordinary spectacle of a people who [. . .] are essentially Western and, indeed, far more advanced in Western culture than many a European community' (James, 1992, p. 49). Later in the decade, in *The Black Jacobins*, James developed his thesis about the modernity of African slaves in the New World: 'James sees the unique history of Africans in the diaspora as not only determining a modern essence avant la letter but as the very condition of possibility of Occidental development and the emergence of a world system' (Nielsen, 2005, p. 20). In *The Case*, after an analysis of the social and political structure of West Indian society, James argues that there is no place for a system 'based on assumptions of superiority which have no foundation in fact' (James, 1992, p. 61). Crown Colony government allows 'a privileged few to work their will on hundreds of thousands of defenceless people', people whose natural development and ambition is stifled (James, 1992, p. 61). By juxtaposing these early essays, then, we can see the conflicted nature of James' position and the beginnings of his later radicalism: through Bloomsbury he celebrates cultural modernity and his own participation within it, but this necessarily points to the political, cultural and economic dependence of the West Indies. While he may be confident in his own abilities and entitlements, the essay contains an underlying suspicion about the metropolis' reaction to this 'black European', as he called himself (Needham, 2000, p. 29), and the 'openness' he ends the essay by evoking.

Melba Cuddy-Keane has used the term 'democratic highbrow' to investigate the importance Virginia Woolf placed on the availability of highbrow cultural values to the common reader. So too with James and Anand: their socialism does not preclude a celebration of the cultural activity they encountered in Bloomsbury, but both are concerned with identifying non-conventional sites of 'highbrowism' and resisting a definition which connotes elitism and excludes the vernacular. For James, as for Anand and *Untouchable*, *The Case for West Indian Self-Government* is right behind, a reminder of the various ways in which colonialism denies, or complicates, this kind of interchange. In addition, reading James' Bloomsbury essays alongside *The Case* implies another critique of metropolitan enlightenment: the text, when published by the Hogarth Press, assumed a high degree of ignorance about the West Indies: as he wrote later, 'most people were hazy about both the islands and the people. The majority [. . .] thought the West Indies had to do with India' (James, 1994, p. 117).

In his last essay for the *Port of Spain Gazette*, "The Nucleus of a Great Civilisation" (August 1932), James makes a crucial displacement act. He moves the reader from London, 'the peak, the centre, the nucleus of a great branch of western civilisation' (James, 2003, p. 111), to the northern, working-class community of Nelson. He cites the townspeople's support of striking cinema operators as evidence of the spirit of freedom and equality on which British civilisation is premised. By re-situating values associated with Britishness in a 'marginal' location, James produces a nuanced account, attuned to his own inheritance, as well as the brutality and oppression also a constituent part of the term. He deflates the myth of the centre, decrying the emptiness of metropolitan public life and the intellectual bankruptcy of the inhabitants who have enjoyed 'sixty years of compulsory education and all the advantages of a great modern city' (James, 2003, p. 111). James moves the locus of centrality, not only north of London but also to the Caribbean ('Far better the *Port of Spain Gazette* than any of these products of a great civilisation' (James, 2003, p. 120)), placing evidence of the residual benefits of modern Civilisation within those communities that have also been oppressed by such a concept.

Anand, *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, and the Woolfs

In Anand's *Conversations in Bloomsbury* (1981), we find a similarly conflicted position: he is 'a naïve poet – just arrived from India' (Anand,

1981, p. 2), eager to learn from the eminences of Bloomsbury, and a political outsider, keen to express his Marxist and anti-colonial views. His opposition to British ignorance and prejudice about India is much more vociferous than James', but of course Anand is writing half a century after the fact, indeed he makes reference to Edward Said's *Orientalism* in the Preface to the second edition (1995).[24] The Preface emphasises the apolitical nature of Bloomsbury: with the exception of E. M. Forster and Leonard Woolf, 'they remained enclosed in their precious worlds, without guilt about their status as aristocrats having been achieved by the labour of generations of industrial workers in the Midlands and the colonies' (Anand, 1995, p. viii). In one sense the situation is simple, Anand viewed himself as a politicised writer, a social realist, suspicious of Bloomsbury aestheticism, and he mixed later more fully with Orwell, John Lehmann and Stephen Spender, but what is interesting is that he still found those conversations/arguments worth having and worth writing about, even years later. *Conversations* allows insight into the developing political consciousness of a colonial intellectual in the metropolis, again supporting the argument that the metropolitan environment, and Bloomsbury more specifically, acted as a galvanising arena in which multiform desires and allegiances were played out.

The essays document his discussions with not only the Woolfs, to whom the text is dedicated, but Clive Bell, Nancy Cunard, T. S. Eliot, Aldous Huxley, Lytton Strachey, Eric Gill, Arthur Waley and D. H. Lawrence, amongst others. He talks to Nancy Cunard about the *Negro* anthology and D. H. Lawrence's primitivism, to Eliot about Hinduism, to Leonard Woolf and E. M. Forster about the links between public school ethos and imperialism, to Clive Bell about 'significant form' and the erroneous distinction between craft and art, to John Middleton Murry, Lawrence, Aldous Huxley and others about Indian nationalism, art, and poetry. The volume emphasises the role of debate, gossip and dialogue in cultural exchange, as well as the anecdotal and ephemeral nature of knowledge exchange. He, like James, characterised Bloomsbury as a 'fraternity': 'I feel that the sharing of these values … the experimentation with ideas – all this was part of living together as an international fraternity. I think, frankly, if I hadn't gone to this school of creativeness, which I call the friendship of people, I may not have written novels' (Fisher, 1985, p. 36). The text marks Anand's claim over the topography of Bloomsbury – charting its pubs, cafés, drawing rooms, publishing houses – the places where such debates, collaborations and conflicts occur. Much as he acts the neophyte, many of the literary 'giants' are portrayed as buffoonish

at best. The encounters are often charged, Anand suppressing his anger more or less successfully:

> I was too overwhelmed by the presence of these legendary literary men. I felt that they did not know very much about my country, and what they knew was through Kipling, or through superficial impressions, except for Leonard Woolf, who had lived and worked in Ceylon and even resigned from the Civil Service because he did not want to be part of Imperialist rule. I, who had been to jail in the Gandhi movement, was fuming inside [. . .] I decided ... I would fight for the freedom of my country forever, though I may admire these English writers for their literary skills [. . .] the thing that disturbed me was that I ... would be a hypocrite, hating British rule in India and living on its dole. (Anand, 1995, pp. 23–4)

The text is riven with oscillating responses; he is at once overwhelmed at his position at the heart of literary London ('I felt stupid and gauche and naïve' (Anand, 1995, p. 26)), yet furious at the racist attitudes he encounters ('I had come to learn from not to teach Eliot, I reminded myself, though I had the irrepressible urge in me out of my own disillusionment with Europe, to show the concave mirror to the Western intellectuals, however eminent they may be' (Anand, 1995, p. 169)). This conflict between intellectualism and politics finds some resolution in the novels, *Untouchable* and *Coolie,* which result from these encounters: 'I am going to rewrite Kipling's Kim ... from the opposite point of view' (Anand, 1995, p. 50).

Anand's essay on Virginia Woolf sticks out in the collection, for his depiction of her interest in Hindu mysticism and his sense of her as an outsider to Bloomsbury, the latter accounting for the former. The encounter starts with reference to Kipling, cynosure for British ignorance about India, and his own expressions of inadequacy – 'shy and tentative, I entered the Woolfs drawing room', 'I was afraid of her verdict on my amateurish writing' (Anand, 1995, p. 102). Quickly the conversation turns to Hinduism, Woolf asking Anand about the androgynous union of Shiva and Shakti, and the re-discovery of the worship of women by the Tantra cults. 'I have a feeling that we are male-female-male, perhaps more female than male. I am writing a novel, Orlando, to suggest this' (Anand, 1995, p. 111), she says, and asks him to introduce her to a Yogi friend of his, Dr Ramji. As narrated by Anand, his literal voyage in is met with a metaphorical voyage out on Woolf's part, a desire to see beyond her own cultural boundaries and create points of transcultural

understanding. Her feminism and ambivalence about Bloomsbury's thoroughgoing rationalism create a situation of empathy, and not merely the empathy 'from' Virginia Woolf of the essay's title: Anand feels her to be 'crazed by her loneliness in the midst of cynics like her husband and Lytton Strachey, Roger Fry, Clive Bell and John Maynard Keynes' (Anand, 1995, p. 107).[25] He sees in her his own frustration at the rationalism of Bloomsbury intellectuals, constructing the meeting as mutually revelatory.

Anand was to have further dealings with Leonard, who wrote an introduction to his *Letters on India*, published by the Labour Book Service in 1942. Although the introduction is epistolary, addressed "Dear Anand", it takes issue with what he sees as Anand's presentation of the '"extreme" Congress [Indian Congress Party] case' (Anand, 1942, p. vii). Woolf repudiates Anand's nationalism, comparing it with Irish nationalism, and arguing that it distorts British involvement in India and marginalises the Muslim position. Woolf declares that he agrees with Anand's 'socialist interpretation' of the history of India, has for years been in favour of Indian independence, and shares Anand's criticisms of the 1935 Government of India Act (Anand, 1942, p. viii), but that 'imperialism produces an extreme nationalist psychology in its victims and its nationalism is just as ugly and dangerous in Indians as in Britons' (Anand, 1942, p. viii). After two examples of Anand's 'misrepresentation' of facts relating to British involvement in India, Woolf comes to his main point, Anand's allusions to the Muslim minority:

> Your references to the problem and to the Muslim League are – you speak plainly in your book, and you won't mind my doing the same in the introduction – fantastic. The nationalism of the Irish – largely due to British imperialism – has started an insoluble Ulster problem in which religion and nationalism have intertwined to produce incalculable harm. You and the Congress Party are beginning to treat the Muslims and Mr. Jinnah as Mr. de Valera treated Ulster. (Anand, 1942, p. ix)[26]

Anand's measured response, addressed "Dear Woolf", is also printed in the edition.

Leonard had, in the 1920s, been secretary to the Labour Party's Advisory Committee on International and Imperial Questions, and in this capacity had pressed the government to move forward on Indian self-government (Glendinning, 2006, p. 233). He was the Committee's expert on African affairs, but he identified Indian self-government (and its

repercussions in Burma and Ceylon), and economic exploitation in Africa as the two key political issues of the 1920s and 1930s (L. Woolf, 1980, pp. 352–3). The Committee was instrumental in the period after Anand's arrival in London in advising Government on Indian issues, from the Simon Commission (1927) on the progress of devolution in India, to the Round Table Conferences (1930–3) and the formation of the Government of India Act (1934–5).[27] He also chaired the New Fabian Research Committee for International Affairs and helped to found the Fabian Colonial Bureau in 1940 (P. Wilson, 2003, p. 116). As Leonard was to write in his autobiography,

> at each stage the demands of Congress for self-government, and Dominion status were met by such grudging and contemptible dollops of self-government that any politically conscious Indian could only conclude that once more the tragedy of freedom would have to be acted out in India – the alien rulers would release their hold on the subject people only if forced to do so by bloody violence [. . .] if British government had been prepared in India to grant in 1900 what they refused in 1900 but granted in 1920; or to grant in 1920 what they refused in 1920 but granted in 1940; or to grant in 1940 what they refused in 1940 but granted in 1947 – then nine-tenths of the misery, hatred and violence, the imprisonings and terrorism, the murders, floggings, shootings, assassinations, even the racial massacres would have been avoided; the transference of power might well have been accomplished peacefully, even possibly without partition. (L. Woolf, 1980, p. 355)[28]

While he was certainly in agreement with Anand's driving political motivations – anti-imperialism and socialism – his hatred of nationalism's effects on minority peoples, along with some residual defensive patriotism, caused him to introduce the text with what reads as a serious indictment, defending himself by stating that his views are in line with those of the Selection Committee of the Labour Book Service. The book should be published, but readers need the caveat that this is one view on the logistics of Indian independence so they 'won't uncritically swallow it whole' (Anand, 1942, p. vii). The gesture is certainly one of cultural imperialism: Woolf the rationalist acting to correct the bias of colonial extremism. The text cannot be self-sufficient, just as Wishart demanded that *Untouchable* be published only with Forster's endorsement, in effect a cleansing of its faecal subject matter, as Anand put it, to 'protect the book against being called "dirty" because it dealt with

dung' (Anand, 1989, p. 99). Kirsten Bluemel has discussed Anand's gradual dissociation from London leftists, as 'he tested the limits of their revolutionary commitments', particularly in relation to Indian independence (Bluemel, 2004, p. 87), but these collaborations and conversations, however fraught or antagonistic, are a constituent part of later articulations or artistic representations of the postcolonial.

The Hogarth Press

One of the main reasons that colonial writers made the journey to London was to increase their publishing and readership opportunities. That Anand and James wished to work for and publish with the Hogarth Press, and that the Woolfs wished to publish them, underlines the Press' internationalism, and its role in the context of anti-imperial politics, one often superseded by its influence on psychoanalysis or high modernism. As Christine Froula has argued, 'one way that Leonard and Virginia Woolf publicly deployed their freedom of speech in the struggle for Civilisation was by creating the Hogarth Press' (Froula, 2005, p. 10). The publication list 'reflects its owners' internationalist vision', as well as 'a cross-section of multidisciplinary thought toward "a new life praxis"' (Froula, 2005, p. 11). The conjunction of avant garde aesthetics and anti-imperial polemic is not contradictory, but rather evidence of the interrelationships between revolutions in form and social and political systems found particularly in the work of Virginia Woolf. Modernism meant a revolution in living, on both global and domestic levels.

John Lehmann's part in the internationalism of the Press must also be acknowledged, given that he was apprentice manager in 1931–2 and then part owner and general manager from 1938 until 1946 when Leonard bought him out (Gaither, 1986, p. xxviii). Lehmann was deeply committed to exposing the British reading public to non-European writers such as Anand: 'we had welcomed Mulk Raj Anand and Ahmed Ali as young Indian writers who held the same ideals as ourselves' (Lehmann, 1955, p. 263).

The Press' list of titles on anti-imperialism is extensive. This is testament particularly to Leonard's contributions to anti-colonial thought in this period. In the 1920s and 1930s 'he assumed Hobson's mantle as Britain's foremost anti-imperialist theorist' (P. Wilson, 2003, p. 83). For Elleke Boehmer, Leonard is the most politically radical member of the Bloomsbury Group; after his experience in Ceylon he 'spent the rest of his career as a publisher, journalist and political adviser translating his opposition to imperialism both into committee action on

decolonization and into unprecedentedly far-sighted political analyses of imperialism-as-violence and the benefits of international government' (Boehmer, 2002, pp. 183 and 181). While the Press' publications on colonial matters bear Leonard's imprint more than Virginia's, the division between political and literary publications does not divide neatly down the husband/wife axis. Leonard's own writings feature prominently, but they themselves are evidence of the collaborations between the Woolfs.[29] In 1917, Virginia was closely involved in researching and indexing for *Empire and Commerce in Africa* (1920), written for the Fabian Society (L. Woolf, 1980, p. 350), and she read the finished text twice (Phillips, 1994, p. viii and Chapman, 1992, p. 210). She also used a phrase from one of Leonard's epigraphs to the book in *A Room of One's Own* (Black, 2004, p. 177).

The many publications on African affairs in the late 1920s and early 30s reflect Leonard's personal interests in African politics, as well as the Press's response to topical issues. One of its key authors on Africa was Norman Leys: *Kenya* (1924), *Last Chance in Kenya* (1931) and *The Colour Bar in Africa* (1941). Leys had worked in the British colonial medical service in Nyasaland and in British East Africa, before he became an ardent anti-imperialist and spent the rest of his life writing about the atrocities he had witnessed (Willis, 1992, pp. 214–15). Lord Olivier, too, was another prominent Press author: *The Anatomy of African Misery* (1927) and *White Capital and Coloured Labour* (1929). Both Leys and Olivier were involved with the Labour Party's Imperial Advisory Committee (L. Woolf, 1980, p. 360), and they frequently put newer writers, such as James, in touch with the Press. One such writer was Githendu Parmenas Mockerie, whose text *An African Speaks for His People* (1934), with a foreword by Julian Huxley, was the first book in English by a Kikuyu (Willis, 1992, p. 231). Press publications on India include Edward Thompson's *Other Side of the Medal* (1925), Graham Pole's *India in Transition* (1932) and K. M. Panikkar's *Caste and Democracy* (1933) (Willis, 1992, p. 232). All three were anti-imperialist in subject matter.

The political force of the Press had much to do with its pamphlet series. The *Day to Day* pamphlets, which included James' essay, were one of a number of series, such as *The Hogarth Essays*, *The Hogarth Sixpenny Pamphlets*, and *The Hogarth Letters*. The forty *Day to Day* essays were published between 1930 and 1939, and dealt exclusively with contemporary political, social and economic issues (Gaither, 1986, p. xxxii). The majority of the early *Day to Day* pamphlets were on Russia (Maurice Dobb, *Russia To-Day and To-morrow* (1930); C. M. Lloyd, *Russian Notes* (1932); Aneurin Bevan et al., *What We Saw in Russia*

(1931)) (Woolmer, 1986, p. 197), but James inaugurated a series of titles on anti-imperialism (W. G. Ballinger, *Race and Economics in South Africa* (1934); Leonard Woolf, *The League and Abyssinia* (1936); Leonard Barnes, *The Future of the Colonies* (1936) (Woolmer, 1986, p. 199). James' pamphlet was followed swiftly by Benito Mussolini's *The Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism* (1933); part of Leonard's anti-fascism was a dissemination of the opposing position. He later commissioned *The Political and Social Doctrine of Communism* (1938), by R. Palme Dutt (Willis, 1992, pp. 251–2).[30] In contrast to the censorship imposed on Anand's writing at the BBC,[31] the Hogarth Press represents the freedom of speech ironically sought in the capital by many colonial intellectuals.[32] The range of progressive political and philosophical thought disseminated by the Press, make it, not a reflection of the interests and friendships of its main author-publishers, but central to accounts of transnational modernism, and those contact zones which generated cultural thought and praxis.

Bloomsbury was a crucible for identities fractured by colonialism. Anand wrote in his autobiographical novel that he had taken home from England 'the freedom to dissent [. . .] against the police rule of the White Sahibs' (Anand, 1984, p. 81).[33] For Anand and James, Bloomsbury was part of the process of definition of emergent vocabularies of nationalism, and transnational manifestations such as pan-Africanism. As Said has described it: 'the voyage in constitutes a specially interesting variety of hybrid cultural work. And that it exists at all is a sign of adversarial internationalization in an age of continued imperial structures' (Said, 1990, p. 31). Furthermore, British metropolitan modernists did not remain unchanged as the geographical boundaries of empire ruptured. Both thinkers rail against and seek to reverse metropolitan ignorance about the colonies amongst supposedly 'englightened' intellectuals. As Orwell wrote in a review of Anand's *The Sword and the Sickle*: '[he is] interpreting Asia to the west' and a 'westernizing influence among [his] own countrymen' (Orwell, 1970, p. 253).[34]

Virginia Woolf's interest in learning from Anand might be seen in relation to *Orlando* or the importance of India in *The Waves*, but James and Anand's shifting positions are also useful for thinking about Woolf's own ambivalence about the Bloomsbury Group and British culture generally. Like these two colonial intellectuals, keen to participate in a subsection of British culture that they in part resisted, Woolf's position does not divide neatly along insider/outsider lines. The outsider position she delineates in *Three Guineas* is not one of complete withdrawal, but one in which women might 'inform themselves of the practice' of

whatever aspect of the culture they are objecting to. 'Thus they would be creative in their activities, not merely critical' (*TG*, p. 205). Anand's novel *Untouchable* and James' *The Black Jacobins* (originally performed in London in 1936 with Paul Robeson in the starring role) emerged out of their metropolitan experiences, suggesting the creative and critical conjunctions of modernism and empire.[35] This is not to imply that London was the only catalyst for either thinker. American culture features prominently in James' oeuvre, of course, as does Dublin in Anand's.[36] Anand, like James, came to learn about European civilisation, 'to reside for a time in a world where ideas of social and human equality could at least be discussed freely' (Anand, 1975, p. 87), but, also like James, he found that 'those very people who were the real custodians of European culture, the intelligentsia, were betraying it' (Anand, 1975, p. 87).[37]

Recent work on the contextualisation and hybridity of resistance has meant a subtler appreciation of anti-colonial thinkers in the modernist period. Grant Farred has written about the impossibility of seeing political allegiance as a 'binarized choice' in James' case despite his origins within a black educated middle-class in Trinidad (Farred, 2005, p. 105). James 'created an intellectual vantage point that was neither distinctly British nor Caribbean [. . .] always informed by his brand of radical politics, his love for high culture, his growing appreciation for the popular, and his conflicted, dialectical movement toward the vernacular' (Farred, 2005, p. 106). This ambivalence has been seen to undermine his 'revolutionary credentials as a theorist of (and actor, in some cases, in) decolonization movements in the Caribbean and Africa' (Needham, 2000, p. 2). Kirsten Bluemel has discussed precisely this problem in relation to Anand's critical reception:

> discredited by the very words that distinguish him, 'Indo-Anglian,' 'radical,' 'eccentric,' Anand's peculiarly English context and language of dissent becomes a liability, the sign of the tainted legacy and continuing dominance of English language and liberalism for members of India's cultural elite. This taint, easy to spot, promotes the agendas of postcolonial critics who can quickly apply their theoretical tools, master, and then dispatch with Anand's writing. (Bluemel, 2004, p. 100)

This desire for 'pure resistance' lies behind the relative silence surrounding the interrelationships between empire and modernism, and applies equally to the Woolfs, as to James and Anand, part of the reason why their conjunction is pertinent. Both Woolf's feminism and her

anti-imperialism have faced the same charge: disqualification due to her privileged class position. However, many of her novels explore the impossibility of pure or all-pervasive resistance, as seen for example in Sara's anti-Semitism in *The Years*. In that novel, Woolf represents the plethora of motivating and interdependent forces – familial, sexual, political – that determine the individual, class or society's capacity for change. Particularly in periods of embryonic social change, as nationalist movements form and relations with imperial masters morph and rupture, resistance is a modulating force, always implicated in the discourse it opposes. 'The meaning of a resistant act, or practice, or event, is not transparent or simply "given" [. . .] "it is socially constructed" a product of interpretation in which historical moment and milieu interact with the purposes and interests of those assigning meaning' (Needham, 2000, p. 6). Reinterpreting those multifarious acts of resistance, part of a reevaluation of modernism in the context of empire, means altering our vantage point on figures like the Woolfs, or the Hogarth Press, or Bloomsbury itself.

Notes

1. See Kirsten Bluemel, *George Orwell and the Radical Eccentrics: Intermodernism in Literary London*, and C. L. Innes, *A History of Black and Asian Writing in Britain, 1700–2000*.
2. See James, 2003, p. 21.
3. See Jane Marcus, "Britannia Rules *The Waves*," *Decolonizing Tradition: New Views of Twentieth-Century 'British' Literary Canons*, ed. Karen R. Lawrence; and Kathy Phillips, *Virginia Woolf Against Empire*.
4. See Anna Snaith, *"The Exhibition in is Ruins": Virginia Woolf and Empire*.
5. The first essay was originally reprinted in *The C. L. R. James Reader* (edited by Anna Grimshaw) as "Bloomsbury: An Encounter with Edith Sitwell", and recently appeared in *Letters from London* renamed "The Bloomsbury Atmosphere" by editor Nicholas Laughlin, who named the second untitled essay "Bloomsbury Again".
6. See Virginia Woolf, *D*4, p. 149. Olivier was also to become Anne Olivier Bell's grandfather (Willis, 1992, pp. 227–8).
7. See Anthony Bogues, *Caliban's Freedom: The Early Political Thought of C. L. R. James*.
8. See Bogues, 1997, pp. 39–40.
9. See Innes, 2002, p. 176.
10. James wrote for the journal in 1933, 1934 and 1936. See issues 1.1(1933), 1.4(1934) p. 72 and 4.1(1936) p. 4. The latter is a provocative article entitled "Abyssinia and the Imperialists" in which James discusses the ways in which the invasion demonstrated the 'savagery and duplicity of European imperialism in its quest for markets and raw materials' (James, 1992, p. 63).

11. See Innes, 2002, p. 218 and Fisher, 1985, p. 24.
12. John Lehmann describes the way in which Anand, despite his cultural difference, shared the concerns of British writers of the 1930s: 'that a writer like Mulk Raj Anand, for instance, author of *The Coolie* [*sic*] and other novels, should take as his world not the feudal splendours and feudal mysticism of traditional Indian literature, but the hard and suffering lives of the millions of his country's poor' (Lehmann, 1940, p. 79).
13. Anand writes, 'in this tragic hour of Spain's destiny, in the moment of her utmost suffering, it is the duty of all of us to look into our consciences and inquire whether we can sit still and see the flower of Spain's manhood sacrificed before the greed of a few who dream of power and feed their insatiable lust for glory and wealth on the blood of men, women and children.' James: 'Against Fascism, against Franco, but against bourgeois democracy too. For the independent action of the workers in the struggle for a Soviet Spain, the defence of the USSR, and international Socialism' (*Authors Take Sides*).
14. Anand's plays, including *Famine*, which was produced to raise money for famine relief work in India, were staged at Unity Theatre, a venue for revolutionary American and Russian plays (Packham, 1978, p. 54). Packham also demonstrates how Anand's blend of Marxism and humanism differed from other British radicals in the 1930s.
15. See Orwell, 1985, pp. 14–15 and Bluemel, 2004, pp. 18–19. In his refusal letter to Malcolm Darling, Anand writes, 'since the breakdown of negotiations between the Viceroy and Gandhiji, the position of Indians in this war has become very invidious. Particularly this is so with regard to Indians resident in England at the moment. Because, even those who have the most distant affiliations with the Congress, are bound to feel a certain sense of national humiliation if, with full awareness of the internment of hundreds of their compatriots and the savage sentence on Pandit Nehru, they do anything to help the war effort' (Orwell, 1985, p. 15).
16. See Orwell, 1985, p. 37 and p. 200, and Orwell, 1998, p. 141 and pp. 210–11. Anand also did talks on Wells and Shaw in 1942 for a series called "These Names Will Live", one on War and Peace for "Books That Changed the World", and his talk about the Spanish Civil War for Orwell's series, "The History of Fascism", was banned by the MOI (see Bluemel, 2004, p. 19; pp. 24–5, and Orwell, 1985, p. 287; p. 44 and, Orwell, 1998, p. 70; p. 85). Anand also ran a series called "Meet My Friend" (Orwell, 1985, p. 194; pp. 199–200) and "A Day in My Life", interviewing ordinary people involved in war work (Orwell, 1985, p. 216).
17. Each programme focused around a topic such as 'childhood', 'war poetry' and 'American poetry' and interspersed discussion with readings.
18. Orwell defended the programme against claims of dilettantism given the wartime conditions, by arguing that 'there are some of us who feel that it is exactly at times like the present that literature ought not to be forgotten' (Orwell, 1985, p. 80).
19. This is particularly true of the BBC's "Caribbean Voices" programme founded by Una Marson and continued by Henry Swanzy.
20. The dating of his work at the Tavistock Square office is also uncertain. Given that *Conversations in Bloomsbury* was written nearly sixty years after the events it describes, critics have questioned its accuracy (see Marler, 1997,

pp. 134–5). Anand writes, for example, in "Tea and Empathy from Virginia Woolf" 'I am sorry I could not finish reading the proofs of *Henry James at Work*. I'll do them tomorrow' (Anand, 1995, p. 106) and in "A Wordy Quarrel with Clive Bell", 'You may remember Mr Woolf talking to you about the little book on Henry James at Work. Here are the galleys' (Anand, 1995, p. 115). This essay by Theodora Bosanquet, the only book in the Hogarth Essays Series to be hand-printed by the Woolfs, was published in 1924 before Anand arrived in Britain. A second impression was printed by the Garden City Press in 1927, but would not have required proof correction (Woolmer, 1986, pp. 25–6).

21. Lehman, *New Writing* 2 (1936): 8–15, and *New Writing* 1 (1938): 208–12.
22. See also Berman, 2006, p. 469.
23. See Innes, 2002, p. 218.
24. See Bluemel, 2004, p. 189, Note 1 for a discussion of 'fictional autobiography' in relation to *Conversations*.
25. See also Jane Marcus' recent discussion of Anand's *Coolie*, in terms of the connections he makes between Indian men and European women (J. Marcus, 2004, p. 173).
26. Victoria Glendinning, countering George Orwell's review of *Letters on India* in the *Tribune* in which he notes that Leonard had written 'a rather angry letter this time which is printed as a foreword', misrepresents Leonard's introduction stating that 'his only disagreement with Anand in the foreword, in fact, had been with Anand's attitude to the Muslim minority' (Glendinning, 2006, p. 356).
27. See Peter Wilson for the specifics of Leonard's views on anti-imperialism (including his theories of economic imperialism, mandates and education) (P. Wilson, 2003, pp. 83–142).
28. See Duncan Wilson for details of the Committee's involvement on Indian self-government (D. Wilson, 1978, pp. 165–71).
29. Leonard's Hogarth publications on imperialism include *Empire and Commerce in Africa* (1925; previously published in 1920 by the Labour Research Department), *Imperialism and Civilisation* (1928) and *The League and Abyssinia* (1936).
30. Leonard originally asked John Strachey and Maurice Dobb to write the book, but both refused, Strachey suggesting Dutt as a possible author (Willis, 1992, pp. 251–2).
31. See Note 16.
32. See Robinson, 1983, p. 32.
33. *The Bubble* contains versions of several scenes from *Conversations in Bloomsbury*, including "Tea and Empathy from Virginia Woolf".
34. Interestingly, in this review Orwell discusses not only the importance of the English language, as a transnational weapon against fascism, but also the emergence of an Anglo-Indian dialect in Anand's writing (Orwell, 1970, p. 253).
35. The play, about the eighteenth-century revolution in San Domingo, was called *Toussaint L'Ouverture* and was performed at the Westminster Theatre before James rewrote it as nonfiction.
36. See Part Six of *The Bubble*, entitled "Dublin Diary" (Anand, 1984, pp. 467–534). See Berman for a comparative account of Joyce and Anand, as well as a reading that complicates his label as 'social realist' writer.
37. Cf. James, 2003, pp. 117–18; p. 120.

10
World Modelling: Paradigms of Global Consciousness in and around Virginia Woolf

Melba Cuddy-Keane

How can we theorise global consciousness in a writer who does not write extensively and explicitly about travel, geography and cross-cultural encounters? Although Virginia Woolf produced a not insignificant body of travel writing, and although we are accumulating increasing evidence of her connections with people from other parts of the world, we still do not imagine her back-packing it through the globe, meeting and mingling with its peoples, becoming, in the words of Pico Iyer, a 'global soul'. Numerous aspects of her gendered, and classed and medicalised body made that scenario unlikely for her life. Possibly as a result, while her novels are permeated with global movement – with departures (Jacob to Greece, Orlando to Turkey, Rhoda to Spain) and returns (Peter Walsh from India, North Pargiter from Africa) – literal global interactions rarely appear.[1] We must turn to her figurative imaginings of geography, peoples and global exchange.

As feminist studies have made clear, however, Woolf's indirectness is meaningful rhetoric. In modelling thinking as fluid, elastic, pluralist and indeterminate, Woolf posed a radical political alternative to the rationalism and determinate orderings of the dominant British tradition, with its entrenched and unequal constructions of gender and class.[2] Nonetheless, Woolf's ideas about gender were thematised and explicit; we must rely almost exclusively on the strategies that Rebecca Walkowitz has called 'articulate evasiveness' (Walkowitz, 2006, p. 141) when it comes to reading Woolf's engagement with the world. But the particular significance for global consciousness, as Walkowitz explains, is the way such evasiveness creates a radically inattentive, or deliberately inefficient, relation between subject and object. Attention, in Woolf's writing, glances off, or glances away – in a manner that closely resembles, I might add, Willa Cather's own compositional intent: 'not

to use an incident for all there is in it – but to touch and pass on' (Cather, 1962, p. 9). There are certain marked absences in such a style, to be sure, but the gain in such 'agitated thinking' (Walkowitz, 2006, p. 130) is the release, without a containing appropriation, of the multiple possibilities and perspectives of other views.

As the history of modernist criticism shows, however, it can be difficult to explain the liberatory conceptual implications of modernist style without seeming to denigrate companionate views expressed in non-experimental prose. In order to clarify the implications of rhetorical modernism without inscribing new imperialisms, we need to connect the *import* of Woolf's 'evasive' world modelling to its numerous parallels and analogues in the ordinary public sphere. For although the dominant political and economic models remained nationalist and imperialist, the modernist era was the time when international theory, international agreements and international peace work were getting their start. In public politics, national governments cooperated in the first attempts to legislate international agreements about the arbitration of disputes, armaments reduction, labour laws (including child labour) and minority rights. Provoked by the First World War, and then promoted by the official and the lay organisations of the League of Nations, peace movements – already in evidence in the nineteenth century – acquired new force. Through the League's committee on Intellectual Co-operation, ideas about international co-operation and connectivity were promoted through educational work, co-ordinated in Geneva, but locally developed in countries, like Canada and Japan, throughout the globe. International Relations, as an academic discipline, dates its origins from this time. In the context of such extensive developments, Woolf's global consciousness is clearly situated differently from her thinking in relation to gender. While her feminist discourse operated from a marginalised space in her society, her global thinking had numerous ties to the public sphere – perhaps with minor voices in history, but not with marginalised cultural groups.

Analysing Woolf's global consciousness thus requires an approach that is at once textual, situated, relational and comparative. Since globality in Woolf is less literal than rhetorical, we need close textual readings to grasp her conceptual models of the world. We have equal need, however, of contextual and comparative analyses, both to situate her thinking in relation to that of her contemporaries and to expand our own thinking by viewing her work through multiple eyes. In a tiny but still timely defence of the value of literature, Northrop Frye posited that literary reading develops our cognitive abilities for 'constructing

possible models of human experience' (Frye, 1963, p. 5), helping us to develop what he strikingly termed the 'educated imagination' – the title he gave to his book. As we expand to the goal of an educated *global* imagination, the range of 'possible models' imposes a challenging task: we must cross the putative borders between literary and cultural texts, between aesthetic and vernacular modernisms, between the West and the East. The frame of the present essay must be global consciousness *in and around* Virginia Woolf.[3]

Considering several models together, however, makes it easier to identify three broad and generalised dynamics, all of which are of continuing relevance today. I have termed the first de-occidentalising and reorienting, en route to a multi-centric view of the world. In the course of history since the fifteenth century, the West unbalanced the world with assumptions of Western power, so that any equitable world modelling depends first on a shrinking, resizing and resituating of the West. Even a balanced world, however, will not eradicate the difficulties posed by two competing apprehensions of identity: relations of difference and sameness co-exist in uneasy tension in every part of our lives. We could name these tensions local and global, but sameness/difference polarities obtain in all communities, whether small and near-by, or expansive and far-spread. I describe the second process, then, as negotiating interconnectedness and atomisation – paradoxical polarities that complicate individual, regional, national and global identities alike. Thirdly, and perhaps most important, world modelling must incorporate the movement essential to multi-directional flows. As global historian Christopher Bayly puts it, 'ideas and political movements [have always] "jumped" across oceans and borders' (Bayly, 2004, p. 3), the putative purity of any culture is continually eroded by crossings whose multi-centric origins can not be definitively located in any one region of the globe.

All three dynamics offer critical points of crossing between Woolf and her modernist world. In tracking such points of contact, I move from correspondences between Woolf's modelling and cultural thinking in her time, to significant differences among various models in their implications and applications, to the effects of combining Woolf's modelling of relations with elsewhere, with elsewhere's view of her. For a global approach takes the text as a functioning part of its culture: cultural voices enter and inform the work; the work responds to and leads back into the flow of ideas around it. It is not always a matter of direct influence; it is often more akin to circulating global talk. Globality engages these circulating patterns, breaks down cultural segregations,

and restores the individual work to the stream of multi-directional global flows. What follows is necessarily brief and selective, but it aims to promote that larger and collaborative critical endeavour of building up an increasing understanding of the large and complex whole.

De-occidentalising and reorienting

After the Second World War, most interwar international theory was discredited as utopian and idealist, unequal to the assumed 'realities' of Machtpolitik and aggressive strategies of control. As Peter Wilson admirably demonstrates in his study of Leonard Woolf's international theory, however, the time is ripe for returning to the interwar period with a new and more complex critical engagement, reassessing the alternatives posed by co-operative thinking to the 'market-oriented and capitalist-dominated world of today' (P. Wilson, 2003, p. 175). While imperialism may at times need to be resisted with its own tools, opposing unethical power with resistant force, we should not lose sight of co-operative, non-combative forms of internationalism, and the alternatives they have posed. The 'losing voices' in history were not necessarily wrong; further, they expose any era's ideological nature as always a complex mix.[4]

In modernist education, such alternative voices were emerging in the teaching of history and geography, largely under the influence of the League. *The United World* (1929) is likely the first attempt to write global history for the schools – not a history of the world, but a history of how the world has been formed through global co-operative effort. Tracing eight themes in human development – Languages, Art, Industry, Transit, Commerce, Health, Government and the United World itself – the authors replace the usual pride in national accomplishment with a celebration of broad human achievement: 'we are the heirs of all the ages', prominent historian G. P. Gooch states in the Foreword, for 'our twentieth-century world has been shaped by the brain and muscle of innumerable men and women, famous and obscure, of every country and every race' (Sherman and Spaull, 1934, p. vii). The historical paradigm inevitably accedes to the Enlightenment narrative of progress, with the consequent exclusion of African and aboriginal peoples from the unfolding story, yet the work strongly condemns the abuses of the colonial powers in their aggressive drive for territory and raw materials. The significant change in world modelling is then the shift from competitive to co-operative ideals: civilisation is imaged as 'a joint responsibility', involving commitment 'not to the part alone but to the whole' (Sherman and

Spaull, 1934, p. viii). An even more revolutionary advance in the teaching of history is proposed in a book published by the Hogarth Press. In *Lies and Hate in Education* (1929), Martin Starr surveys current textbooks for unconscious imperialist bias, urging the importance of teaching alternative histories, of teaching history the other way around. Citing another Hogarth book, E. P. Thompson's *The Other Side of the Medal* (1925), and its redesignation of the 'Indian Mutiny' as the 'War of Independence', Starr wryly suggests that 'All references in history books to other nations might be submitted to historians of the nation concerned, though this might involve a drastic revision of some books in use' (Starr, 1929, p. 170).

In geography, new conceptual modellings were complicating notions of absolute space with ideas of scale, relational size and relative views. Two-dimensional representations of the globe are of course always problematic, and objective mapping itself has been accused of imperialist aims.[5] Yet the end of the nineteenth century brought a cartographic shift from the sixteenth-century Mercator projection, with its enlargements of northern and southern continents at the expense of equatorial regions, to the Mollweide projection, with its more accurate representations of proportional size and shape. In the modified Mollweide projection employed by the League, the continents of Africa and India are given central prominence, while the British Isles and even Europe are relocated in a smaller, peripheral place. Even more radically, visual graphics began to display relational distance and size. Another League-influenced textbook, *The Dawn of World-Order* (1932), gets its readers imaginatively to conceive the way accelerated travel and communication are shrinking the globe. By diagramming the 'space' of a one day's journey by stage-coach in 1832 and by airplane in 1932, a consistent black bar shows that people in London are now as close to people in Germany (650 miles) as they once were to people in Bath (108 miles). Another illustration depicts the way connectivity, in the space of a hundred years, has shrunk the globe to approximately 1/6 of its former size. While modest in terms of the perspectival refigurations now possible through digital cartography, such visual graphics complicated notions of absolute space with ideas of scale, relational size and relative views.

Both historical and cartographic practices were thus reforming thoughts of the globe and, in so altering perspectives of England, they evidence a process that Jed Esty describes, in *The Shrinking Island* (2004), as 'reverse colonization' at work (Esty, 2004, p. 21). As England retreated from its role as a colonial power, Esty argues, Englishness was recast as a 'minor culture' (Esty, 2004, p. 22), a transformation that some

intellectuals – including Virginia Woolf – seized as 'an opportunity for cultural repair' (Esty, 2004, p. 7). The transformation that Esty locates in the 1930s and 1940s, however, is clearly in force at an earlier date. Furthermore, as England shrinks, it does not do so in isolation; it alters in relation to other parts of the world. The rejection of the colonial paradigm was accompanied by a further movement I would call 'resituating and regionalizing' England.[6] As England ceases to be the centre of empire, it is reconceived as one of many participant regions in a dynamically complex globe.

Such processes of shrinking and resituating inform Woolf's geographic imagination as well. A contraction of England appears at least as early as her 1906 Turkish diary, where the speaking 'I' continuously deflates her tourist positionality and gains some self-ironised satisfaction from the way life in Constantinople proceeds happily 'with no thought or need of certain great countries yonder to the west' (*PA*, p. 348). The shrinking island itself appears as a formative image in her first novel, *The Voyage Out* (1915). As the *Euphrosyne* sets out to sea, the people on land, caught up in their daily activities, slip into complacent self-satisfaction with little thought for the fate of those on the ships; on board, however, the collective eye of all passengers looks back to experience an alteration in scale: 'Not only did [England] appear to them to be an island, and a very small island, but it was *a shrinking island* in which people were imprisoned' (*VO*, p. 24; my emphasis). Here the effect of altered perspective is metaphysical and anti-anthropocentric: *all* continents shrink proportionally against the vast canvas of an 'empty universe'.

Voyaging out re-sizes the British Isles again in *To the Lighthouse* (1927), reconfiguring the Western world. Like the passengers on the *Euphrosyne*, Cam looks back on the island (here in the Hebrides) from her place in a moving boat: 'It was like that then, the island, thought Cam [. . .] She had never seen it from out at sea before. [. . .] It was very small, shaped something like a leaf stood on end' (*TTL*, p. 289). Shrinking also entails resituating: the diminishing size of retreating land increases the relative significance of other centres on further shores. Slipping its anchorage, Cam's semi or other consciousness voyages out to the East: '[Drops from a fountain of joy] fell here and there on the dark, the slumbrous shapes in her mind; shapes of a world not realised but turning in their darkness, catching here and there, a spark of light, Greece, Rome, Constantinople' (*TTL*, p. 290). Yet, rather than abandoning the British Isles, Cam's expanding vision assigns her home a part, though a small part, to play: 'Small as it was, [. . .] it had, she supposed, a place in the universe – even that little island?' (*TTL*, p. 290). Relational

seeing thus alters proportional significance, decentering the previously dominant, but then accommodating it, within the larger vision, as no longer a threat.

In Woolf's final novel, a similar geographical repositioning occurs not through an ocean but in a pool. And here the altering of perspective more radically resituates the entire continent of Europe as peripheral, even dispensable, in the global sphere. At the end of the pageant in *Between the Acts* (1941), Lucy Swithin gazes into the fish pond, transforming the lily pads on the water's surface into an imaginative map of the world: 'Now the jagged leaf at the corner suggested, by its contours, Europe. There were other leaves. She fluttered her eye over the surface, naming leaves India, Africa, America. Islands of security, glossy and thick' (*BTA*, pp. 204–5). Then, in a premonition of the oncoming destruction – the novel is set in June 1939 – Lucy spins her globe around to its other side. Thinking of life as a dragon-fly, she projects its continuing spirit into other lands: 'Couldn't the dragon-fly', Lucy wonders, 'settle, if we destroyed it here, then there?' (*BTA*, p. 205). Diminishing, displacing, resituating, even possibly replacing the Western world, Woolf supplants concepts of absolute space with flexible, variable and positional spatial relations, changing not only the global map, but cognitive mapping as well.

In the interwar years, a vein of mobile and reflexive global thinking thus jumped the putative borders between Woolf's aesthetic modernism and ordinary public discourse, as evidenced even from the few examples I cite above. In highlighting patterns of de-occidentalising and re-orienting, however, I am not claiming that they represent the educated global imagination; rather than an achieved ideal, they are developments in a process of historical thinking – the continuous, ongoing activity of *educating* always to be pursued differently in different locations at different times. In a context informed primarily by stable and centred world views, a variety of discourses reached toward a new mobility in global positioning – like passengers on a ship, learning to look both out and back with new eyes. Such alterations of view brought a new flexibility into models of self/other relations and aided a conceptual shift from single-centred to multiply-centred models. It was a significant global move *for its time*.

Atomisation and interconnectedness

In a related development, the tension that, in the Victorian age, was generally construed as a conflict between the individual and society,

between opposing imperatives from within and without, began to be reconceived as the co-existence of separate and collective ways of viewing the self. Darwinian theory privileged individual fitness as the most crucial element in species survival, suggesting the primacy of competitive, aggressive instincts against the pressures for socialisation emanating from unrealistic and unviable spiritual ideals. Yet Darwin himself struggled to accommodate the evidence of co-operative activity in various species, and a tradition of Russian thought – popularised in the English consciousness by Petr Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* (1902) – argued that the struggle against adversity was, in a wide variety of species, best pursued through collective action. Significant local differences thus emerge, as Daniel Todes has suggested, between Western models of competition generated in a capitalist industrial economy, which pits organisms against each other, and Russian models of cooperative survival more attuned to the struggle of organisms against the environment of a vast, under-populated and inhospitable land. For my purposes here, however, what matters is that both models had a formative influence in interwar thinking, and that their perceived relation was shifting from the conflict of instinct versus moral order to the co-existence of two varying instincts, two contrary desires, within the self. But if the human organism harbours both a motivation toward autonomy and goal-oriented achievement *and* a motivation toward communal life and collaborative interaction, then paradoxes and ambiguities must inform any conceptual models of self/other relations. While there are extraordinarily wide disparities in specific articulations, the underlying significance for internationalism is this: instead of modelling the globe as a collection of warring nations requiring authoritarian controls from without, managing global conflict becomes a question of how simultaneously to negotiate two different desires emanating from within.

The need to be separate and the need to associate produce the co-dependent polarities of atomisation and interconnectedness, and oscillations between these two forces have been frequently posited as the underlying structure of Woolf's rhythmic prose. Jessica Berman has further argued the cosmopolitan significance of the 'mosaic' of 'fragmentation even within affiliation' in *The Waves* (1931; Berman, 2001, p. 122; p. 123), tumultuously instantiated in Bernard's attempts to articulate both his feelings of singular identity and his inability to distinguish his life from that of his friends. Despite the aesthetic exceptionalism, however, of this novel's fluid and imagistic mode, Woolf's conceptual modelling again has its analogues in the public sphere. The voices in *The Waves* embody, on a personal level, the paradigm advanced in the

League's self-styled educational 'propaganda' of individual nations united in a co-operative global whole; we can also reach farther from Europe to a pertinent parallel in Indian thought.

In early twentieth-century India, the rise of independence movements was strikingly accompanied by the emergence of Indian models of internationalism – some, like Rabindranath Tagore's, invoking a spiritually perceived holistic universe, others, like that of the Bengali intellectual Bipin Chandra Pal, rationally articulating a model of interdependent parts and whole. At a time when Western audiences were elevating Tagore's mystical internationalism, Pal was critiquing Tagore's overly *abstract* universalism, arguing that 'the universal is not something which exists by destroying the particularities of the particulars but which rather completes and fulfils them' (Pal, 1918, p. 23). Yet particularism without universalism was, for Pal, an equally unacceptable course, leading dangerously to aggressive, self-oriented nationalisms. Using the term 'personality' rather than 'individual' for the former's less isolating connotations, Pal defended 'the human personality and its right of free movement for its own realisation, [but] within the limits which the similar right of other nationalities impose upon it' (Pal, 1918, p. 21). Pal then turned to 'the complete and composite Indian peoples' as a global model for equitable separateness and union (Pal, 1918, p. 70). Proposing an international federation in which Great Britain would be – but *no more than* Ireland, Egypt, India and the over-seas Dominions – a *contributing* part, Pal modelled each country as 'autonomous within itself, and absolutely free to manage its own particular affairs, but all combined for purposes of mutual protection and progress, and above all, in the pursuit of those larger humanitarian ends wherein every national life and history must fulfil itself' (Pal, 1918, pp. 74–5). In imagining the nation as fulfilled in, rather than reluctantly acceding to, internationalism, Pal, like Woolf, conceived singularity and collectivity as different but co-existing apprehensions of the self.

Pal is of course no more representative of thinking in India than the writers I cite above are representative of thinking in England. Diversity of voice exists in all cultures at all times. But these possibly minor cultural voices reveal a level of global connectivity often obscured by dominant discourses alone, exposing the difficulty of attributing any one ideology to the West or the East. At the same time, similar models have specific relevance in their place and their time. Pal's imbricated modelling offered a means for closing the gap between the Indian moderates who advocated colonial self-government and the nationalists who argued for total separation and autonomy; a similar model

deployed by T. S. Eliot focused instead on the rifts in Europe after the Second World War.

Eliot's *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* (1948) develops, like a cross-cultural correlate to Pal, a complex, hybrid modelling of atomisation and interconnectedness. Eliot urges the need for 'a common world culture, which will yet not diminish the particularity of its constituent parts' (Eliot, 1962, p. 62), arguing further that culture as a whole must be conceived as a mix of diverse, overlapping and contradictory sub-groups.[7] As a remedy for postwar Europe, Eliot calls for unity to heal wounds and foster peace; multiplicity, to forestall the rise of any further mythologies of a dominant, superior race.[8] Individuals, he claims, should belong to multiple sub-groups at the same time, and the unavoidable friction among sub-groups will prevent the consolidation of arbitrary power in either isolated factions or a totalitarian whole. Yet Eliot undercuts these positive potentials for fragmenting and balancing power with moves that perpetuate power's repressive hold. The problem, however, lies not in his fundamental conception but with its restrictive application, and the combination of narrowness and fear that it encodes.

Positing the basis for European community in shared history, Eliot locates unity in the common heritage of the Christian faith, and diversity in its local variants, joined in '*inter-communion*' rather than '*union*' (Eliot, 1962, p. 77; emphasis in original). A problem, however, is that limiting shared history to Christianity ties the hope of European unity to the dominant, but non-inclusive, tradition; the difficulties are compounded by Eliot's fear that, if Europe were to lose its Christian traditions, it would experience centuries of barbarism before its culture could be rebuilt (Eliot, 1962, p. 122). In fleshing out his model, Eliot – unlike Pal – remains fatally attached to what is, rather than what could be. At the intra-national level, we see a similar inability to surpass existing forms. A positive aspect of Eliot's preservationist approach is his defence, within the nation, of multiple nativist cultures – within Britain, not only the Irish, Scots and Welsh, but the distinctively English as well. Yet his belief in the value of nativist cultures leads him to argue against immigration; he also essentialises the traditional family, since, for him, only familial ties will ensure a concern for future generations; and he argues for the preservation of class, on the grounds provides that allegiance to class a necessary antithesis to local allegiances. By reacting to war with a call for increased stability, and by deriving that stability from a fixed construction of the past, Eliot's model regrettably offers no potential for adapting to global change.

What distinguishes Woolf's modelling of hybridity from Eliot's is her openness to mobility and transformation.[9] While *The Years* (1937), for example, is, like most of Woolf's fiction, intensely a novel about England, it also charts the momentous change from the 1880s, when it was too dangerous for Rose Pargiter to venture into the London streets alone, to her sister Eleanor's increasing arc of travel – to Devonshire, to Spain, to Italy, to India and finally, in the early 1930s, further outward to Tibet. Such voyaging out instigates the processes of de-occidentalising and re-orienting as well. Following her travel in Europe in 1911, England shrinks in Eleanor's geographic imagination, appearing comparatively young after the thousands of years of civilisation in Greece (*TY*, p. 196), and 'small', 'smug', and 'petty' after the open-air life in Spain (*TY*, p. 205). Yet Eleanor also resituates England as a modest part of the larger world: Devonshire takes on a humble beauty, and the downs, 'becoming larger and simpler', merge into the horizon as 'part of the sky' (*TY*, p. 205). In shrinking the globe, travel furthermore heightens connectivity: Eleanor's *dream* of travelling to India, interrupted by the outbreak of the First World War (*TY*, p. 213), becomes the comfort and familiarity of actual travel to India in her later years: 'Oh, India. India's nothing nowadays', she remarks. 'Travel's so easy. You just take a ticket; just get on board ship' (*TY*, p. 335). Eleanor refers not simply to the increasing ease of travel; she implies that Indian civilisation is now, if not continuous, then at least contiguous, with her own.

Eleanor's familiarity with India might appear, however, as a colonising gesture, and there is a discomforting tokenism in the one Indian guest at the family party – 'one of Eleanor's Indians' her niece casually remarks – and in Eleanor's red cloak, which her brother Martin describes as 'a present from Bengal' (*TY*, p. 354, p. 356). 'Localism remains formative' (Bayly, 2004, p. 165), and Woolf does not idealise border-crossing as complete. Yet Eleanor's 'home' has become a site of radical heterogeneity, so that the difference of elsewhere merely extends the differences already informative of here. Furthermore, North Pargiter – commenting on Shakespeare's mix of tragedy and comedy – earlier makes a dazzling conceptual leap: 'Contrast', he says, 'The only form of continuity' (*TY*, p. 346). Sameness offers only mass, not interconnectedness: whereas mass is stasis, differentiation enables the sequence or movement on which continuity depends. In similarly paradoxical fashion, North constructs a global image of atomisation and interconnectedness, resembling (remembering Eleanor's Bengali cloak) the modelling of Bipin Chandra Pal: 'a world', North reasons, 'that was all one jelly, one mass, would be a rice pudding world, a white counterpane world' and he struggles

for a way to imagine being separate and together at the same time: 'be the bubble and the stream, the stream and the bubble – myself and the world together' (*TY*, p. 410). Separateness and association cohere, for no clear and settled binaries delineate self and other, or personal and collective selves. And such indeterminacy makes for openness, as rhetorically and typographically imaged in the stuttering, stammering words of Nicholas Pomjalovsky, with which Eleanor enthusiastically agrees: 'It is only a question [. . .] of learning. [. . .] The soul – the whole being [. . .] It wishes to expand; to adventure; to form – new combinations?' (*TY*, p. 296). As the inclusion not only of the Indian guest, but also of Nicholas, a Polish homosexual, within the family grouping indicates, Woolf's traditional family unit, unlike Eliot's, is transforming and opening up. And the loosening of grip – on the family, on the sentence, and, as I will further suggest, on Englishness – creates gaps both for change and for other voices to intervene.

Multi-directional global flows

A participant thus in her era's geographical reimaginings, Woolf increasingly conceived history as a process of global collaboration, signalling, like many of her contemporaries, the increasing need for co-operative effort as international conflicts escalated toward another war. In "Thoughts on Peace in an Air Raid" (1940), Woolf insists that the effort to 'think peace into existence' can not be done by England alone, asking further, 'what is the use of freeing the young Englishman if the young German and the young Italian remain slaves?' (*DM*, p. 248). Since the fundamental problem is posed by aggressive human instincts, she argues, no single country can devise a remedy, nor is it likely to come from countries already embroiled in the war. Ending with an invocation of other voices, Woolf quotes a phrase from Sir Thomas Browne: '"The huntsmen are up in America . . . "'; she continues, 'Let us send these fragmentary notes to the huntsmen who are up in America, to the men and women whose sleep has not yet been broken by machine-gun fire, in the belief that they will rethink them generously and charitably, perhaps shape them into something serviceable' (*DM*, p. 248). In 1940, the United States had not yet entered the war, and history had yet to add its ironies to Woolf's invocation of America as a shaping force in world peace. Yet by alluding not to contemporary America, but to the America imaged in 1658 by Sir Thomas Browne, Woolf conjures up an earlier country before the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. Moreover, if Woolf turns literally to American voices, the ellipsis following her

quotation leaves a gap, like Nicholas's, to be completed by Browne's next words: 'The Huntsmen are up in *America*, and they are already past their first sleep in *Persia*' (Browne, 1964, pp. 174–5). The implications of Woolf's allusion go further than America, while her rhetorical modelling engages a process that, following Browne, we might term collateral flows.

Woolf's allusion is to Browne's *The Garden of Cyrus* (1658), a discourse on ancient horticulture, which, in tracing all occurrences of the number five and related quincuncial patterns, slips from gardens to mathematics to mysticism to suggest – not to define – the underlying wisdom of God. The work's eclectic method has been read as a precursor to stream of consciousness; according to one of its critics,

> the principal appeal of the work – and of the mind creating it – is its ability to keep opening outward, absorbing and assimilating the surrounding world, while admitting exceptions, and, in doing so, turning a remote improbability – the quincunx – into a possible explanation for [. . .] 'a universall and common Spirit to the whole world.' (Post, 1987, p. 145)

In 1923, Woolf made reading notes on *The Garden of Cyrus* (Silver, 1983, p. 126; p. 133), transcribing a passage from its dedicatory letter which argues the greater mental freedom in treating subjects that are obscure. Woolf's (slightly inexact) transcription continues, 'Besides such discourses allow excursions, & venially allow of collateral truths, though at some distance from the principals' (Browne, 1964, "Garden", p. 64).[10] Collateral means to run side by side, in parallel; to lie aside from the main subject; to be indirect, accidental and unplanned. Collateral thinking suggests an opening of the mind to side excursions and, in the process, to global flows.

In its geographic scope, Browne's subject encompasses Greek, Roman, Hebrew, Indian and Persian gardens; for while Nebuchanezzar is generally understood to be the creator of the famous hanging gardens of Babylon, Browne credits his titular Cyrus of Persia for their formation and shape. The word 'paradise' indeed derives from the Old Persian '*pairidaeza*,' meaning enclosure or park (*OED*), and the ancient Babylon of Mesopotamia would be in present-day Iraq. Browne's closing evocation thus completes a global circuit. As the Persian gardens have been the starting place of his thinking, so the contemporary Persians – waking as he goes to sleep – will carry it on. For, as he states, 'To keep our eyes open longer were but to act our *Antipodes*' (Browne, 1964, p. 174).

Not only does Browne shrink from thinking for the other; he installs the other's thinking in his place. Such refusal to '*act our Antipodes*' is, I suggest, intrinsically linked to the strategy Walkowitz describes as 'evasive', or that Cather terms 'to touch and pass on'. By lightly invoking Browne's imaged circuit of cooperative thinking, Woolf models a historically and geographically interdependent world and, like Browne, without voicing the other's part. A similarly circuitous model is again lightly touched in *The Years*, through allusions to global flows.

In addition to her easy travel to India, in addition to wearing an Indian cloak and inviting to the party an Indian friend, Eleanor thinks in a manner that suggests a confluence with, if not the influence of, Eastern thought. The connection here, however, is not with Pal's rational internationalism but with the mystical traditions of Hindu spiritualism. A *part* of Eastern thought is here synchronous with a *part* of Western thought, an aspect of global flows that reminds us both not to homogenise any one part of the world, nor to assign modes of thinking to any one realm. For Eleanor's ability to think outside the empirical rational box of the dominant English tradition leads her both to an apprehension of a continuous collective existence and out to the further exploration of what she might learn from the East.

Attempting to explain her happiness in the 'world of living people', Eleanor 'wave[s] her hand as if to embrace the miscellaneous company, the young, the old, the dancers, the talkers; Miriam with her pink bows, and the Indian in his [pink] turban' (*TY*, p. 387). The heterogeneity encompassed by Eleanor's inclusive gesture connotes sympathetic range, while her perceptions hinge not on rational ordering and logical connections, but on almost subliminally-detected repetitive rhythms: the Indian's pink turban, Miriam Parish's pink bows, and in the novel as a whole, the twice repeated image of Rose's pink dress. A scene unfortunately omitted from the published novel further conveys Eleanor's integrative mind. Dining alone in a restaurant in 1921, and oppressed by the fragmentation and separation of London life, Eleanor suddenly intuits a unity linking the isolated objects on the table, connecting not just functional, metallic objects like fork and knife, but running from fork to flower, and 'from the flower – she put out her hand and touched it – to the spoon' (*TY*, 1992, p. 399). In the novel's final chapter, a circuit of such integrative touching runs throughout the room. Although the conversations are marked by gaps in understanding, differences in opinion, and failures to finish sentences and thoughts, there are approximately forty instances of touch, including ten gestures in which someone pats, or lays a hand on, or brushes against another person's

knee, five gestures where a hand taps or is laid on an arm, eight where hands are placed on another's shoulders. Something passing through the assembled group soothes them with a sense of human community even while it leaves – touching and passing on – their individual differences intact.

This intuited underlying pattern implies – in a mystical manner reminiscent of Forster's Godbole – the interconnectedness of all things in the universe, without subjecting them to logical order. And it is tempting to speculate – especially since Eleanor seems to be preparing for a Tibetan journey by reading a book by the Dalai Lama – that Woolf is suggesting Eleanor's gravitation first to a Hindu, then to a Buddhist mode: '"What I want to see before I die," [Eleanor says,] "is something different ... " She waved her hand out of the window. They were passing public buildings; offices of some sort. " ... another kind of civilization. Tibet, for instance"' (*TY*, p. 335). *This* wave of the hand – indicating not what she includes but what she wants to surpass – sums up the British institutions of commerce and government, and the empiricist logical discourse on which they rest. *This* wave of the hand represents her desire for a difference further from home. Yet Eleanor's thinking is left uncategorised; the narrative refrains from classifying it as the Indianisation of the imagination or as a syncretic result of cultural exchange. Woolf resists the type of cultural categorisation that Forster presents in *Passage to India*, avoiding the reductionism it encodes. As far back as her extraordinary Turkish Diary, she had written, 'But when we come to consider the question of the West & the East – then indeed – we lay down the pen, & write no more' (*PA*, p. 352). Woolf is certainly *suggesting* some contact between Eleanor and India, but, refusing to act her Antipodes, Woolf leaves indeterminate precisely what that contact is.

In a world of global flows, however, Woolf's provocative Eastern allusions link to a reciprocal suggestivity in the writing of Mulk Raj Anand. Whereas all the writers here share, in some way, Woolf's multi-layered and relational global thinking, it is Anand whose style and conceptual modelling most closely connects with hers. Although his *Conversations in Bloomsbury* was not published until 1980, he claims to have drafted it in the 1920s to record his meetings with the extended group of writers and artists who congregated in the Bloomsbury locale (Anand, 1981, Preface, n.p.). Later included as part of his autobiographical novel *The Bubble*, in genre it far exceeds eye-witness account to achieve what I might call the novelisation of conversation. In the opening chapter, Anand quotes Bonamy Dobrée's words 'anything can make a novel' – a remark, I suggest, that self-reflexively illuminates Anand's own form.

Conversations is a crystallisation of voices, a form akin to and indeed anticipating Woolf's *Between the Acts*. As Lucy Swithin says there, 'The Chinese, you know, put a dagger on the table and that's a battle' (*BTA*, p. 142); Anand manifests a similarly concise ability to touch and pass on.

As Eleanor expands her world to the East, so Anand extends his world to Leonard and Virginia Woolf. In deftly sketched cameo portraits, Leonard appears as the kindly empiricist, Virginia, as the spiritual seeker, while Anand, not unlike Lily Briscoe with Mr and Mrs Ramsay, encompasses both. There is an element, in this wry twist on life and fiction, of Anand's holding up a mirror to Woolf's work, just as there is an element, in his depiction of her as lost and uncertain, of reversing the power dynamics that he experiences in his relation with these older and successful Westerners from his position as an Indian youth. But Woolf's lack of answers also meaningfully becomes, in Anand's narrative, the point where they connect. When Woolf expresses a wondrous curiosity about Hindu beliefs and rituals, Anand proposes to introduce her to a Dr Ramji, whom he describes as a former Bengali terrorist then running aYoga Institute in Regent's Park. For Anand, who is himself struggling with his ambivalence toward Hinduism, is nevertheless excited by the many intersections between Woolf's interests – she is in the process of writing *Orlando* – and Hindu thought: the power of female energy, buried remembrances of other worlds, ideas of androgyny and the union of opposites, awareness of the Unseen, and intuitions of the cosmos as a whole. Indeed, unlike Anand's view of T. S. Eliot – whose cameo appearances looking like a banker in a business suit accord with his continual retreat from Anand's attempts to discuss the references to India in *The Waste Land* – Anand's depiction of Virginia Woolf, while not uncritical, reveals him finding or making a connection from her world to his own.

The vignette ends with Woolf's urgent request that Anand bring Dr Ramji to meet her, and we learn no more. Publishing his account so many years later, Anand seems deliberately to tantalise with the suggestion that Woolf reached out to Vedic practices to calm and enrich her thought. But rather than imply direct influence, Anand hints at the less tangible presence of circulating flows – rather like the relation Woolf traces between Chaucer's art and the Paston family letters when she reads both as shaped by, and thus interconnected through, ordinary common speech.[11] The voices I have been tracking participate in a similar, though more diverse and more globally circulating, common talk – a way of thinking with vast differences in application and articulation, but with interconnecting bridges nonetheless.[12]

Such talk did not represent all the voices in modernist culture, or all the voices in Woolf's texts. Yet it introduced a larger ethical perspective against which other voices could be judged. It signified a resistance to imperialist constructs, posing an alternative to the reigning aggressive and delimiting paradigms for organising the world. And it upheld the value of collaborative human effort, seeking, across the boundaries of aesthetic and vernacular, East and West, and – remembering Sir Thomas Browne – present and past, intuitions of human solidarity that in themselves could unite all peoples in common cause. Subject to internal contradictions and lapses, it yielded no final attainment of wisdom; it led to no solution for eradicating war. But it left behind a continuing question for those seeking a more balanced world: if life is driven by the dual impulses of separation and association, might globalism play out differently if equal incentive and encouragement were given to both? Woolf's last novel, *Between the Acts*, stages a similar question, as one of the pageant's concluding scenes presents people of all races (representing the 'League of ... ') rebuilding civilisation's wall (*BTA*, p. 182). The audience/reader must juggle the implications: naive cliché, idealist failure or the foundations of hope?

Such indeterminacy once again reminds us that the educated global imagination is not a place that we can be, but a continuing process of altering views. Like the broader perspective Woolf often evokes through landscape, wind or sky, global consciousness forms a backdrop against which human figures fluctuate and change. Locating Woolf in this broader public sphere reveals a larger Woolf than the writer so often confined, in general studies of modernism, within the limits of aesthetic and/or feminist space. Yet the global backdrop also resituates her – like Eleanor's Devonshire downs – in a greater and vaster world, playing a special but small role in the continuing course of human existence, and becoming part of the larger whole.

Notes

1. The examples are drawn, respectively, from *Jacob's Room* (1922), *Orlando* (1929), *The Waves* (1931), *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), and *The Years* (1937).
2. See Antony Easthope, *Englishness and National Culture* for the broad claim of empiricist discourse as the dominant tradition in English national identity.
3. See Jeanette McVicker's "Postcolonial Approaches" in *Palgrave Advances in Woolf Studies*, ed. Anna Snaith for the background of postcolonial debates concerning issues of Woolf's resistance to, and complicity with, the dominant

imperialist views, and my "Global Modernisms" in the *Blackwell Companion to Modernist Literature and Culture*, eds. David Bradshaw and Kevin J. H. Dettmar for an overview of the new questions and framings introduced by global study.

4. In "Akbar's Dream", Paul Stevens and Rahul Sapra present an impressively documented argument for a positive globalism at work in early modern England, as English travellers, encountering traditions of religious tolerance in Moghul culture, were 'unmoored' from their own culture's dominant paradigm of progressive Western destiny, and compelled to acknowledge the superiority of the tolerance and civility of the East. Thus complicating the postcolonial critique of a putatively seamless cultural blindness in Western imperialist nations, Stevens and Sapra claim a 'limited heterogeneity' (Stevens and Sapra, 2007, p. 396) in English/British cultural historicism due to a process of 'reverse transculturation' in which the West was guided by the East. Seeking similarly to acknowledge heterogeneity by acknowledging history's losing voices, I welcome this essay as important historical background to my own, but with these differences. Rather than attributing origins, I tend to adopt Christopher Bayly's idea of 'multi-centric change'; also, in the modernist interwar period, unmoorings toward co-operative tolerance were not so limited, nor were they as subject to an instrumental-spiritual divide. Consider, for example, Peter Wilson's summary of the extraordinary accomplishments of the Co-operative movement in the interwar period (Wilson, 2003, pp. 172–4), along with the historic 'Peace Ballot', conducted in 1935 by the League of Nations Union in England, in which more than eleven million people voted for arms reduction, as opposed to less than one million against.
5. See my on-line paper, "Imaging/Imagining Globalization: Maps and Models", for such critiques, but also for illustrations of the new pluralistic possibilities available in digitalised cartography.
6. I use the term 'regionalising' rather than 'provincialising', since I seek a less evaluatively connotative term whose implications might extend equally to all regions of the world. See the discussion of Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe*: *Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (2000) in Stevens and Sapra.
7. Eliot does not, as is usually assumed, define culture as intellectual culture; culture for him is 'a whole way of life' (Eliot, 1962, p. 31; p. 41), and intellectual culture, only its conscious part, or perhaps only the part that is conscious of culture. Further, while he stressed the importance of European unity, he acknowledged the influences of Eastern thought and sensibility, stating that 'The frontiers of culture are not, and should not be, closed' (Eliot, 1962, p. 114). The difficulty of being 'fair' to Eliot's argument is enormous, since the conclusions he reaches are so inadequate to the present day.
8. The Appendix to *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* consists of three broadcasts to Germany, published in Berlin in 1946, and evidencing Eliot's courageous peace-making gesture in urging intellectual co-operation so soon after the war.
9. For the relevance of these two constructs to the debate over the wording of the Preamble to the Constitution for the European Union, see my "'Collateral Truths': Global and International Discourse in Virginia Woolf,

Sir Thomas Browne, and T. S. Eliot", an earlier conference version of the present essay.

10. The original reads, 'Beside, such Discourses allow excursions, and venially admit of collaterall truths, though at some distance from their principals' (Browne, 1964, p. 86).
11. See Virginia Woolf, "The Pastons and Chaucer", *The Common Reader* (1925).
12. Another current in this circulation – remembering the Indian in a pink turban – might be through W. B. Yeats's relationship, beginning in 1931, with Sri Purohit, whose rose-coloured robes, according to Jeffrey Paine, won him the description, among Irish wags, of the 'giant pink carnation' (Paine, 1998, p. 182). Yeats revered Sri Purohit, travelling with him to Majorca to translate the Upanishads; Woolf knew Yeats of course, and conversed with him about dreams and the Occult in 1934 (*D*4, p. 256). Yeats wrote that her novel *The Waves*, 'suggest[s] a philosophy like that of the *Samkara* school of ancient India, mental and physical objects alike material, a deluge of experience breaking over us and within us, melting limits whether of line or tint' (qtd. in *D*4, p. 255, n. 28).

11
Small Talk/New Networks: Virginia Woolf's Virtual Publics

Brenda R. Silver

Introduction: talking about talk

How does one talk about talk in a formal essay, when what one wants to convey is the very informality of the activity and its role in changing literary publics and discourse? The answer, I decided, is to act as if it were talk, the small talk, conversation, chat that animates interactions among individuals and links them into networks. Think of the talk that occurs at conferences, the Virginia Woolf Back to Bloomsbury conference, say, where the discussions generated by the staged panels and the small talk between the acts extend far beyond the time and space of the conference itself. Or, more to my point, think of VWOOLF, the email discussion group that for eleven years now has talked it way into becoming a network that may or may not constitute a community, that may or may not be considered a public. How much, I began to wonder, can VWOOLF be read as a contemporary inscription of what we think of as 'Bloomsbury', reconfigured as a vibrant discursive manifestation of cyberspace and internet culture? And what does it tell us about the nature of literary discourse occurring not in the academy, but among the growing number of readers who hold their conversations online?

To the extent that VWOOLF exists in the digital realm, it constitutes an example of computer-mediated-communication, or CMC, a form of exchange that in the process of redefining what we understand about discursive communities has generated a heated debate about the nature of community itself. On the one side are those who see CMC and cyberspace as the end of community, civic life, the public sphere, and any form of serious public discourse; on the other, those who see them as the harbinger of an exhilarating resurgence, including the resurgence of the public intellectual. But within this debate an increasing number

of voices have begun to argue that it is a mistake to present the choices as an either/or zero-sum conflict. Instead, we need to rethink what we mean by community and how it operates both online and off, and to do this we need to rethink our concepts of 'place', of networks, of groups, of publics. In a gesture that will be familiar to literary critics, these voices urge us to think in terms of both/and.

In many ways VWOOLF inscribes a both/and dynamic. It is both a private mailing list, with an 'owner', that one subscribes to, and it is open to anyone who has access to email and wants to join. Being email it functions like a private letter with a specific addressee, but the addressee is multiple; it can in fact be anyone – anyone who is subscribed to the list, including strangers – making it a form of public speech. Unlike some lists, it is not mediated or edited; every posting goes automatically to all subscribers. As in the idealised version of the 'public sphere' famously defined by Jürgen Habermas, in principle anyone can speak, but there are protocols for what kind of speech is acceptable and what is not. Even the language used on the list, as in email in general, is hybrid: written words that are closer to speech, a language described by Walter Ong as a 'secondary orality' fostering a 'participatory mystique' and 'communal sense' (Ong, 1982, p. 136), and by some linguists as a contact language such as Creole (Baron, 2000, pp. 256–8). In terms of process, the list functions both as a scholarly discussion group, whose goal is the sharing of one's ideas with others working in the same field, and as a forum for more personal exchanges. Finally, the messages posted on the list occupy a grey zone when it comes to copyright. To the extent that email constitutes publication, it is covered by copyright law, but, like other publications, it also falls under 'fair use'.[1]

I do not take the issues raised by the dual public/private status of the list lightly. Nor do the increasing number of scholars, almost all of them social scientists, who have explored the ethics and contingencies of transforming Internet discussion groups into materials for their research.[2] My own interest in the conversations swirling around Woolf grows from my on-going study of where and how subordinate groups, or counter-publics, in particular women and/or feminists, speak in the public sphere, an interest that led me in 1997 to predict that the future lay in 'the potentially unregulated and hence potentially more truly "public" sphere of the Internet' (Silver, 1998, p. 232). In this essay, my questions, presented in good list fashion as a series of threads, focus on what is produced by the talk that circulates in the virtual realm and its place in defining what counts as literary and/or cultural discourse.

Thread 1. Subject: VWOOLF

The VWOOLF list is an active, lively, international forum on just about everything, no matter how weighty or trivial, to do with Virginia Woolf, her writings, her friends, and her representation in the texts that have transformed her into both canonical author and star. The subscribers, consisting of academics, students, common readers and a number of people active in the arts – described by one poster as 'academics, neophytes, hobbyists, appreciators' – have no qualms about sharing the depth of their feelings for the writer and her works and/or loudly disagreeing with each other, including disagreements about what the list is or should be. But however contentious the conversation might become, the list keeps talking. 'What binds us together as a virtual community', one person wrote after a series of 'grumpy' exchanges, 'is the pleasure and challenge we take from reading what Virginia Woolf wrote.'[3]

VWOOLF went online on 20 February 1996; by 20 March the current description tells us, 'the list had already acquired 154 subscribers – before any hard copy announcement . . . had been sent out' (VW List). As of February 2007 the official number was 751. Although the list provides newcomers with guidelines for the proper netiquette – for example, limit your posts to thirty lines of text; restrict your comments to issues pertaining directly to Woolf; don't use the list for private conversations or to sell anything – they are minimal and periodically ignored, particularly when the discussions become heated, prompting the list owner or another member to step in. In one case, a series of long contentious posts by a single individual on subjects other than Woolf led one subscriber to comment, 'I don't want to automatically filter out your voice . . . and I'd hate to unsubscribe from a list that I've enjoyed for 7 years or so, but I'm starting to feel spammed.' This led in turn to a note from 'your humble list "owner"' reminding posters to keep it short and to the point, and urging them to share their ideas about Woolf's writing in 'pointed, witty, civil, curious, and generous ways'. I will return to this.

While the VWOOLF list is the most inclusive and active of the virtual discussions of Woolf and her works, it is not the only one. On Yahoo, there is the Virginia Woolf Club, composed of 62 members, whose announced purpose is reading and discussing specific works together; at Western Canon University's Virginia Woolf and To the Lighthouse Lecture Hall you can 'enjoy an archive of fellow students' wit and wisdom' or arrange for real time chats on the Virginia Woolf Live Recitation site. Other lists have come and seemingly gone: one on Yahoo called Bloomsbury Times; a Japanese list, A Room of Woolfians'

Own. In October 2006 the members of a short story blog discussion group chose Woolf's short story "Kew Gardens" as their topic (Curious Singularity).

Then, of course, there is Amazon.com, which urges its shoppers to 'write an online review and share your thoughts with other customers', and readers certainly do. When last checked there were 151 reviews of *To the Lighthouse*, 141 of *Mrs. Dalloway*, 36 for *A Room of One's Own*, 30 on *The Waves*, and 41 on *Orlando* on Amazon.com alone; these numbers do not include the reviews of the multiple versions of each novel posted on Amazon.co.uk. As Marjorie Perloff comments in her essay about the revival of modernist literature, "The Aura of Modernism", it is not just academics who have made modernism hot; 'the broader English-speaking public that communicates on the internet' also plays a role. For Perloff, whose own essay appeared in the first issue of *Modernist Cultures*, 'a free, easily accessible e-journal open to anyone who is interested in the vibrant field of modernist studies', Amazon reviewers, posting from around the world, may not 'be professionals or even students', but they are 'generally well informed and highly literate', and their comments on *The Waste Land* or Stein's *Tender Buttons* illustrate Walter Benjamin's prediction that 'in the age of mechanical reproducibility, "at any moment the reader is ready to turn into a writer"'. 'What motivates customer reviews', she adds, 'is the invitation to make their voices and rankings heard by others' (Perloff, 2005, pp. 4–5).

Thread 2. Subject: mailing list culture

But lists do something more than Amazon reviews: they promote conversation, argument, satisfying what all the literature on the subject takes as its starting point: the desire for communication. In this sense mailing lists are no different from any of the venues for what is called 'many-to-many' communication on the Internet, whether we are talking about early bulletin boards such as The WELL, the once ubiquitous newsgroups on Usenet, real-time chat rooms, virtual worlds such as Second Life, social networks such as MySpace and Facebook, or, increasingly, the interactive comments found on blogs. As Howard Rheingold described their activities in his 1993 book *The Virtual Community*, individuals use these venues 'to exchange pleasantries and argue, engage in intellectual discourse, conduct commerce, exchange knowledge, share emotional support, make plans, brainstorm, gossip, feud, fall in love, find friends and lose them, play games, flirt, create a little high art and a lot of idle talk' (Rheingold, 1993, p. xvii). Although the formats have

changed and subsequent writers have brought a more critical perspective to the phenomenon, their description of the impetus remains the same: 'its power and novelty as a medium of person-to-person communication' (Porter, 1996, p. xii).

The origins of electronic mailing lists, which date back to the early 1960s, illustrate vividly the on-going process of appropriation that makes new technologies, whether the telegram, the telephone, or computer networks, a medium for talk. Here the heroes of the story are the 'hackers', the designers and programmers working on the development of what became the Internet under the auspices of ARPA, the Advanced Research Projects Agency funded to a large extent by the Pentagon and universities, who started to invent ways to send each other messages through a shared computer. Email was one result, followed by group mailing lists, often initiated by graduate students; SF-LOVERS, for the use of science fiction fans, proved the popularity of the genre. While the Pentagon was not particularly happy about this use of the technology, they did not intervene; if they had, they would have lost many of their top programmers (Rheingold, 2000, pp. 69–70).

From their beginnings in the 1960s, mailing lists were considered 'a low-tech, cheap, and open way to exchange information and arguments' (Lovink, 2003, p. 69). Geert Lovink, the co-founder and past moderator of nettime, a mailing list on net art and criticism, thinks of them as a conversation occurring in public. On these lists, he writes,

> the public controversies among participants have an aspect of staging open conspiracies. Lists are contemporary versions of salons [. . .] Subscribers must have the feeling of being in an open, yet protected environment in which their contributions are properly valued. They are honored guests and equal members at the same time, not in need of a leader, telling them what to think or post [. . .] The online struggle between adversaries accommodates a plurality of differences – breaking down consensus, without blowing up the list itself. (Lovink, 2003, p. 99)

In its ideal form, he notes, a list is a 'text-only social sculpture' (Lovink, 2003, p. 99).

Numerous scholars have explored how these virtual conversations work, both linguistically and agonistically. Communication theorists, for example, writing about the differences between computer-mediated and face-to-face communication, describe a greater 'acceptance, if not cultivation, of argumentative discourse' in virtual discussions that co-exists

alongside the 'preference for agreement' characteristic of social conversations. 'This paradox', one researcher writes, 'is compelling', leading him to ask how these groups 'manage this more adversarial communication context while retaining the discursive coherence and cohesiveness necessary for enacting socially appropriate rational discourse' (Marby, 1998, pp. 14–15). Some of the answers focus on the use of quotations from the original posting in a response, a strategy known as 'framing' (Marby, 1998, p. 15; Voiskounsky, 1998, pp. 39–40). Others note that the conversations are more polylogues than dialogues and that, occurring asynchronously, everyone holds the floor at the same time, making interruptions easier but less disruptive (Rafaeli and Sudweeks, 1998, p. 174). Although many theorists contend that the group will always move toward restoring some kind of agreement when discussions get out of hand, Lovink and his co-founder at Nettime, Pit Schultz, disagree, arguing that the multiple voices rightly subvert the formal argument/counter-argument dialogue that leads towards synthesis. Instead, they create a 'discursive flow' of different types of text that contextualise each other in an ongoing meta-critical conversation (Lovink, 2003, p. 99).

Thread 1 continued. Re: VWOOLF

How does all this play itself out on VWOOLF? For one thing, dedicated as it is to a shared interest in a particular subject, it fulfils one of the basic qualifications for mailing lists: it has 'a vision, a groove and a direction'; it 'comes from a true need' (Gubas; in Lovink, 2003, p. 69), which includes both the need experienced by scholars for information and the need, expressed eloquently by posters of all stripes, for a place to talk about their interactions with Woolf. The fact that many of the posters believe these interactions give them a direct line to Woolf is part of what makes the list so inherently edgy.

Much of what occurs on the list, as on all the many-to-many discussion forums, is an exchange of information: posters asking questions about the meaning of specific words in specific texts, or where a particular passage they remember but can not place appears, and others answering them. Often what starts as a question becomes a full-fledged sharing of assumptions and/or sources about broader literary and cultural issues. A question about *Mrs. Dalloway*, for example, evoked a long discussion about the use of the term 'black' in the description of Peter Walsh's fiancée in India and what the term 'Anglo-Indian' meant in 1925. Similarly, a question about Woolf's attitude towards her mentally-disturbed

half-sister Laura evoked first Woolf's comment in her diary about a group of mentally-handicapped persons seen in a park, 'They should certainly be killed', followed by a similar comment by D. H. Lawrence, which in turn precipitated an extended discussion not only of what might have motivated the two writers but of the general attitudes toward eugenics at the time. The discussion ended with a reference to an essay on eugenics and modernism that used Woolf's words.

Other posts, rather than asking for information, supply it: information about upcoming events having to do with Woolf and Bloomsbury; newspaper and magazine articles that include references to Woolf, Bloomsbury and so on. These, too, provoke talk, some of it deeply serious. In January 2004, for example, a post about the lack of accuracy concerning who was and was not part of The Bloomsbury Group on an educational web site that defended itself by saying it was geared toward the general reader and not scholars, led to a discussion about the negative impact of a tolerance for inaccuracy in our society as a whole, including, or particularly, the inaccurate information about the 'weapons of mass destruction' used to justify the invasion of Iraq.

The on-going exchange of information exhibits one of the basic characteristics attributed to lists as a virtual community: an economy of gift-giving, of reciprocity, where those who answer questions from people who are often strangers do so in part because they know they may one day need to ask a question themselves. As Rheingold explains the phenomenon, 'The person I help may never be in a position to help me, but someone else might be. That's why it is hard to distinguish idle talk from serious context-setting. In a virtual community, idle talk [. . .] is where people learn what kind of person you are, why you should be trusted or mistrusted, what interests you' (Rheingold, 2000, pp. 49–50).[4]

Often, the 'idle talk' takes a more imaginative turn, illustrating the collaborative constructions endemic to network culture. This collaboration permeates the on-going interpretative readings of Woolf's texts, its primary literary manifestation, but it also has a strong creative aspect. Witness, for example, the posting with the subject line 'Escallonia', asking if the plant had a different name and whether it could be bought that produced a discussion of what would be in a Woolf garden: blue hydrangeas, jacmani clematis, a number of trees. But my favorite example of creative collaboration occurred as part of what was called the Nicole Kidman controversy, initiated when someone posted an article from the *San Francisco Chronicle* announcing that Kidman would play Virginia Woolf in *The Hours*. Although the initial response was mostly horror ('Why, Michael Cunningham, why?'; 'I'll try to get my family off

the planet in time'), the discussion soon took a more productive turn, generating first a long list of actresses people would rather see in the role and then, the casting of an entire Bloomsbury film. 'This is much more fun than waiting for the film to come out and then criticising', one poster noted; while another offered suggestions for what he'd like to see and not see: 'And please God, no shots of Kidman/Woolf going down for the third time in the river Ouse!!'

But not all the discussions are as benign as these. Even a request for information, if it has been asked before or could be answered with a little research can evoke snippety responses, while the discussion generated by Kidman and the projected film led to some of the most acrimonious exchanges ever. These included a number of posts about gay male appropriations of Woolf's life, including her representation as 'tortured genius', female appropriations through identification, gay bashing, the market for gay books versus lesbian books, and who 'owns' Virginia Woolf that exhibited the personal verbal violence associated with what is known as 'flaming'. or 'flames'. Still, I would argue that something is built by these inflammatory exchanges as well. As I noted earlier, the agonistic nature of list talk has generated a great deal of critical discussion, so much so that it almost seems to be the defining characteristic. One set of explanations focuses on the textual nature of the genre, the fact that the talk is written, not spoken directly to someone standing in front of you, thereby dissociating language, one commentator notes, from 'its immediate social contexts, implicit hierarchical decorum, and constant phatic reinforcement' and allowing 'the transmission of messages that would be, if not exactly unthinkable, at least nearly unperformable in an oral situation' (Millard, 1996, p. 147). The result, as one list member approvingly put it, is 'people expressing themselves and others responding [. . .] without the dubious pleasures of social lying'. Another part of this explanation points to the 'immediacy' and 'ephemerality' of responses and personae online, neither of which lend themselves 'to dispassionate, considered scholarship' (Millard, 1996, pp. 147–8). Being offended and lashing out in return, another poster noted, 'seems inevitable in the e-domain: email is often a product of the id, I fear!'

There is one other explanation worth considering here: that the often mixed nature of the participants in lists such as VWOOLF, its 'co-mingling' of 'the amateur and the professional, the undergraduate and the tenured', 'produces status anxiety' – what I would call cultural class warfare – that can 'add to the combativeness' (Millard, 1996, p. 148). We see this on VWOOLF, I think, when, on the one hand, requests for

information elicit replies that go something like, 'I know reading critics on Woolf is unfashionable on this list ... but ... ,' and, on the other hand, when a self-declared 'novice' who felt intimidated by the first response to her query writes, 'It took some courage to ask the question to so many Woolf experts; you can be sure I will not make that mistake again.' In another serious blowup, precipitated by a message that was meant, the graduate student writer explained after the fact, to be a 'lighthearted attempt to poke fun at MY assumptions' about Woolf's readers – in this case an ebay book seller – the writer speculates that her angry, non-academic adversary 'may have had run-ins with academic snobs before'; as a result, 'this whole ... exchange might have resonated as another insult to you'.

But however you explain the combativeness, I understand its fascination for both participants and commentators alike. I often find the disagreements not only compelling, but enlightening, as if the frictions, even when they become flames, force people to examine their assumptions and state why they think what they think. For one Net critic, the heated debates indicate a resurgence of persuasion and performance as powerful rhetorical tools (Millard). Another way to understand them is to say that during the more contentious debates the list ceases to be, as Lovink puts it, 'a neutral forum where everyone can give his or her opinion' and becomes instead a tool, a 'potentially powerful common context [creator]' (Lovink, 2003, p. 84). The disagreements, that is, become a meta-critical tool for defining the list's nature and significance, and with it, what a literary or cultural discourse might be. One sees this at work in response to the novice's complaint about 'intimidation':

> To post a topic is to invite complex and vigorous response. You have voiced your opinions, others have voiced theirs. I would say that you should be glad to have stimulated this conversation and should continue to feel entitled to post your ideas and your queries on the listserv without fear (but with the knowledge that responses could be intense and could differ significantly from your own point of view).

While there have been a number of recurring disagreements on the list – about incest, madness, Woolf's sexuality and its place in her writings, biographies of Woolf, *The Hours* – I want to mention just a few. One revolves around the question of whether the list trades in 'trivia', which not only hinges on the larger question of what, if anything, 'trivia' might be but speaks to the larger question of why people participate. In one riff on the topic, introduced by a new subscriber who

apologises in advance if his comments are inappropriate, the poster wonders 'why some of us' are 'interested in what seems to be very insignificant? Can you imagine what VW's own response would have been to people's curiosity about her favoured brand of cigarettes … ?' At the same time he also provides the parenthetical information that Woolf 'often smoked cheap shag tobacco in her own roll-ups, or a cheap brand of French cheroots called Voltigeurs – you see, I can't resist the lure of Trivial Pursuits either.' Responses came immediately. One pointed to Woolf's defence in *A Room of One's Own* of the 'trivial' nature of women's pursuits compared to men's; another argued that 'trivia' is part of the desire to 'know [Woolf], both as a writer and as an individual like "you and I"'; while a third located 'Woolf's consumer choices' within the study of material culture, where it 'can yield to us information about her self-definition and social circles'.

More to my point, the debates about trivia, which often hinge on the desirability or danger of reading Woolf's writings through her life, have links to a far more inflammatory subject: the role of theory and what is often called 'jargon' in the list, a subject, I have discovered, that often pits members of mailing lists against each other. The AUSTEN-L mailing list, for example, which, like VWOOLF included both academics and common readers, for years explicitly warned 'scholars who follow the most fashionably "up-to-date" critical theories' that they 'will get along much better on AUSTEN-L if they remember that they are not addressing colleagues from their own clique – but rather a general group of educated, but largely theoretically unenlightened, Austen-readers.' Even Nettime, which one post described as a 'social entity' composed of 'critics, artists, academics and other workers on the electronic forefront', experienced a tension between 'professional intellectuals (most of them male Anglo-Saxon academics) and "illiterate media workers"' that often manifested itself in the difference 'between precisely formulated critiques and casual remarks'. 'Textual critical authority', one post warned, 'can simultaneously encourage and suppress the introduction of new voices/communications' (Lovink, 2003, p. 92).

Back on VWOOLF, a series of increasingly angry posts during the summer of 2000, precipitated by talk of Deleuze and postmodernism, not only attacked 'theory' as 'the private code of an academic elite' or 'academic hair splitting', but used it to ask who the list is for and why people join it. The acrimony led to a post from the list-owner with the subject heading 'Summer Netiquette' emphasising the diversity of the list and topics and asking for 'tolerance of the full range of responses that Woolf's texts elicit'. But the list was having none of it; rather

than ending the argument, this appeal instead generated a series of messages supporting what one writer about lists calls their 'dirtiness', a term linked to the analogue distortion of Vinyl records that gives us 'a higher resolution, a recursive, deeper, infinite structure. It means here to affirm the noise aspect, but only to generate a more complex pattern out of it' (Schultz, in Lovink, 2003, pp. 98–9).[5] As one poster to VWOOLF pointed out, 'all conversations are more or less exclusionary'; 'uninteresting threads die out for lack of participation, not because they've been censored. This is the somewhat brutal democracy of list-servs'; another protested against 'either/or arguments', proposing that 'we keep pushing the dialectic to include both/and' as well as a place for 'crankiness'.

Part of what interests me here is the emphasis on language and whether certain kinds of talk can undercut the desire for conversation that holds the list together. This question also played a role in two heated arguments over whether the use of the term 'authoress' to describe Woolf was demeaning and/or sexist and/or common British usage that became an argument over people's assumptions about the list itself: that is, whether the term was appropriate for a list devoted to Woolf that took for granted her and its feminism. For one poster, 'Some of us don't like a lot of things – including certain words and their connotations', but 'objecting to the use of such terms on the grounds that this is a Woolf list is ridiculous'. For another member, however, the argument 'opened up a very rich can of worms: if we can't talk about the implications of language, the connections between language, culture and power, etc. on this listserv then it has failed, I think.'

I am also fascinated by the way the list's refusal to accept a call for tolerance and move on to something else becomes for Net critics one of the medium's strengths, signifying a desire not to have a definitive end, even if the end is 'let's all agree to disagree'. Writing of the tension that often exists between those who want to quiet dissent and those who resist, Brian Connery cites the following post from an unnamed mailing list: 'I do not think that a "can't we all just get along" appeal is desirable or realistic, but it seems to me that an "anything goes" attitude toward argumentative method and personal address will soon leave whatever conversation exists in tatters.' But Connery has a different view, arguing that these 'potentially universally accessible space[s] for unregulated discussion', 'which allow us to rehearse non-authoritative social relations through a potentially never–ending conversation, [. . .] may be the Internet's greatest contribution to our future' (Connery, 1996, p. 175).

With this in mind, I want to step back from the list and suggest some ways to frame it, including its intersections with Bloomsbury and its provision of a public space where views that often never make it into the mainstream media can be expressed and debated.

Thread 3. Subject: groups, networks, communities and Bloomsbury

Bloomsbury, I think it fair to say, constituted itself through talk. That is certainly how Virginia Woolf described it in her memoir "Old Bloomsbury" when she ascribed 'the germ from which sprang all that has since come to be called [. . .] by the name of Bloomsbury' to talk (*MB*, p. 186). Looking back at her journal from the winter of 1904–05 she pinpoints those entries where she has written 'we talked to Strachey and Sydney-Turner' or 'we talked with Bell about the nature of good till one!' only to continue, 'how difficult – how impossible' it is to describe 'talk – even the talk which had such tremendous results upon the lives and characters of the two Miss Stephens' (*MB*, pp. 186–7). This talk, initiated by the men while they were at Cambridge and continued in the drawing room at 46 Gordon Square, began as talk among individuals in a private house or a restaurant but expanded into a conversation that often occurred in public: in the clubs they joined and created; in the literary and art criticism they wrote and published; in the cultural and political debates they carried on in journals, novels and polemical tracts.[6]

Bloomsbury, of course, is also a place, an area of London where many of those talkers lived, an urban neighbourhood where people could walk to visit each other and the social interactions occurred face-to-face. In this sense, as well as in its extended kinship ties, Bloomsbury can be read as constituting the traditional community characterised by sociologists as 'spatially compact and densely-knit' (Wellman, 2001, p. 5). Interestingly, speculating on her Bloomsbury relationships in 1924, Woolf uses the same metaphor: 'Suppose our set to survive another 20 years, I tremble to think how thickly knit & grown together it will be' (*D2*, p. 326). When those associated with Bloomsbury began to spread out more, they re-enacted what sociologists describe as a shift from 'door-to-door' to 'place-to-place communities', where people often travel long distances to see each other and keep in touch, as Bloomsbury did, by letters or phone.

Ironically, one of best ways to understand the role of Bloomsbury as both physical place and social, intellectual entity grounded in

conversation, comes from the New York writer Diana Trilling, who had little if anything good to say about Woolf and her set, even as she shared with them more than she was willing to admit. In the Foreword to the book she called *Claremont Essays* after the 'small street in New York City on which I live', she explains that the title both celebrates a neighbourhood and has a less private purpose: its location of the individual writer within her social frameworks and networks, which in Trilling's case included the ideas and individuals associated with the New York Intellectuals and *The Partisan Review* (Trilling, 1964, p. vii).

I have mentioned this because much of the debate about whether virtual 'communities' *are* communities hinges on the role of place. For those who lament the loss of the physical places traditionally associated with community, computers, email and mailing lists do little to bring it back; as the radio commentator Jim Hightower put it, 'While all this razzle-dazzle connects us electronically, it disconnects us from each other, having us "interfacing" more with computers ... than looking in the face of our fellow human beings' (Wellman and Gulia, 1999, p. 169). On the other side are those who, like Steven Jones, argue, usually cautiously and with provisos, that 'communities formed by CMC' are 'incontrovertibly social spaces in which people still meet face-to-face, but under new definitions of both "meet" and "face"' (Rheingold, 2000, p. 349). Some of these new definitions come from sociologists, who have long recognised that communities are not necessarily 'solitary groups of densely knit neighbors' located in a particular space, but are instead 'networks of interpersonal ties', or 'social networks' (Wellman and Gulia, 1999, p. 169; Wellman, 2001, p. 2). 'Network', of course, is the key term here, signifying a linguistic and conceptual space where social formations and online talk increasingly intersect. As Barry Wellman puts this, 'We find community in networks, not groups. Although people often view the world in terms of groups ... , they function in networks' (Wellman, 2001, p. 1). 'Members of virtual communities take for granted that computer networks are also social networks spanning large distances' (Wellman and Gulia, 1999, p. 169)

When I first began to work on this essay I posted a message to the list asking when Bloomsbury began to be called the Bloomsbury Group with a capital G, a designation, it seems to me, that can and has been used to turn the individuals named as 'belonging' to it into a monolithic and/or exclusive entity. When the VWOOLF list debates, as if often does, who was in or out of the Group, they run the risk of ignoring each individual's location in a series of intersecting social and professional networks, although many participants do point out the difference between a core

group of intimates and their peripheral connections. This doubleness echoes what sociologists have argued about networks in general: that the individuals within them have both strong ties with family and friends, and weak ties, such as those that link us to colleagues, acquaintances and friends-of-friends, and it is often the weak ties that are more useful. This is particularly the case when it comes to the exchange of information that characterises VWOOLF, because weak ties, connected to diverse social, professional and intellectual circles, are likely to know things that you and your small group might not (Wellman and Gulia, 1999, p. 184).

VWOOLF shares a number of other attributes with online networks as well, including a 'permeable, shifting [set] of participants, with more intense relationships continued by private email' (Wellman and Gulia, 1999, p. 184), an attribute that might be used to characterise Bloomsbury as well. But most of all, perhaps, it illustrates the observation by researchers that virtual networks built on shared 'interests, values, affinities, and projects', when 'they stabilize in their practice, may build communities, virtual communities, [that are] different from physical communities, but not necessarily less intense or less effective in binding and mobilizing' those who participate in them (Castells, 2002, p. 131). 'The human use' of the Internet, Wellman writes, 'is creating and sustaining community ties' that 'have transformed cyber*space* into cyber*places*' (Wellman, 2001, p. 3)

Thread 4. Subject: VWOOLF, publics and counterpublics

Once we reintroduce place, however virtual, into the picture we find ourselves in the midst of an intense, on-going argument about what kind of place this is. Indeed, the controversy over whether virtual communities are 'real' communities pales before the strongly divided readings of whether the Internet constitutes a 'public sphere' and, if so, what kinds of publics constitute and benefit from it. For the purposes of this essay, the issue is not about the public sphere per se, but what many consider its defining characteristic: talk, and the publics who produce and are in turn produced by it. For Habermas, of course, one of the defining characteristics of the emergent public sphere in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was its emphasis on the norms of reasoned discourse, of rational critical argument, a discourse in which, one commentator writes, 'the best rational argument and not the identity of the speaker was supposed to carry the day' (Calhoun, 1992, p. 13). The public sphere, another writer adds, 'designates a theater in

modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk' (Fraser, 1992, p. 110).

Today, eighteen years after Habermas's book on the public sphere appeared in English, we know that the public he depicted and extolled was both limited and highly exclusive: an educated elite, one commentator notes, with 'education and property ownership' – not to mention being male – as its 'criteria for admission,' that came to think of itself as constituting the public (Calhoun, 1992, p. 16).[7] Instead, we are more likely to talk about a multiplicity of publics and counterpublics. For Michael Warner, '*the* public' has little validity except as 'a kind of social totality', the people in general, whether 'organized as the nation, the commonwealth, the city, the state' (Warner, 2002, pp. 65–6). In contrast, a 'public' or publics '[come] into being only in relation to texts and their circulation' (Warner, 2002, pp. 65–6). The significance of these publics is their ability to enable 'reflexivity in the circulation of texts among strangers who become, by virtue of their reflexively circulating discourse, a social entity' (Warner, 2002, pp. 11–12). The result is 'a special kind of virtual social object, enabling a special mode of address' (Warner, 2002, p. 55).

Warner's speculations about what constitutes a public sound uncannily like VWOOLF. 'A public', he posits, 'is a space of discourse organized by nothing other than discourse itself ... It exists *by virtue of being addressed*' (Warner, 2002, pp. 67–8); elsewhere he defines it as 'an ongoing space of encounter for discourse' (Warner, 2002, p. 90). It is contingent on the circulation of texts 'that can be picked up at different times and in different places by otherwise unrelated people' (Warner, 2002, p. 68). While it does not depend on the individuals being in the same place at the same time, it does need 'the concatenation of texts through time' (Warner, 2002, p. 90): texts that precede and respond to each other and that are connected not just by sequence but by interactions. These interactions must be seen as more than just a dialogic conversation, in as much as they address onlookers, 'characterize the field of possible interplay' (Warner, 2002, p. 90), draw upon different genres and idioms, evoke citations: are, in short, what Warner calls 'reflexive' (Warner, 2002, pp. 91–2) and I have called 'meta-critical'; in the process, they performatively construct the object of address. To the extent that a public exists by virtue of being addressed, it has an 'imaginary' quality to it (Warner, 2002, p. 73): we do not know in advance who or what that public may be, making it 'a relation among strangers', (even when, like the participants on VWOOLF, many of them know each other (Warner, 2002, p. 75). The result is to unite 'strangers through participation

alone', producing a 'social relationship' that is 'peculiarly indirect and unspecifiable' (Warner, 2002, pp. 73–5).

VWOOLF, then, can be understood as a public that is also a social entity, one produced by its ongoing, interactive address to individuals whom we may or may not know but who become part of the public by virtue of subscribing to the list, reading the messages, and, perhaps, replying to them. But it is also a counter-public, which, while it operates discursively just like a public, constitutes itself through premises, speech genres and modes of address that, Warner posits, 'differ markedly in one way or another from the premises that allow the dominant culture to understand itself as a public' (Warner, 2002, pp. 112–13). While a counter-public 'maintains at some level, conscious or not, an awareness of its subordinate status', its 'speech genres and modes of address' constitute a means to express and assert itself in what Warner calls 'the hierarchy among media' (Warner, 2002, p. 119).

In the case of VWOOLF, the dominant public can be identified with the institutionalised sources of literary and cultural discourse, including both academic journals and, more importantly in this context, the mainstream press, which has been cited over the years by list members as indifferent to anything its participants might have to say. If we understand VWOOLF to constitute a counter-public, the arguments about theory, language, audience exclusiveness and inclusiveness can be read as reflexive, discursive, performative acts that mark it off as something distinct from the public addressed by the mainstream press. To me the most compelling instance of the latter, one that also clearly marks the list's status as counterpublic, occurred in the acrimonious debates generated by *The Hours*, during which, despite, or perhaps because of, the acrimony, people got to argue in public about topics that almost everyone I knew was talking about, but were almost totally absent in the media.

The particular debate I am thinking of (there were several) started with an exchange about whether Cunningham had 'gone too far' in trying to get inside of Woolf's psyche before shifting into debates about whether the representation of Woolf as a 'tortured genius' was a cult fixation for some gay men; whether the novel 'appropriated Woolf's life into a gay male template'; whether gay male publishing trumped lesbian publishing in the current marketplace; whether the publishers did market research within the gay community before publishing the novel; whether the 'Hours-bashing' occurring on the list was accurate or appropriate; whether 'female appropriations' of Woolf, 'usually [involving] total identification' are any better than male ones. One male wrote, 'what exactly would you like us men who love and admire Woolf's

work to do? Never teach it or recommend it to friends? Never let it influence our lives?' The debate ended, temporarily, with the question from another poster, 'Who "owns" VW? Feminist scholars? Common Readers? Students? Men? Lesbians? Gay men?' I, for one, felt perversely proud at this moment, listening to talk that produced a discourse – and a public – counter to that produced by the hagiographic discourse I was reading in the press.

Thread 5. Subject: where are we?

When I presented the original version of this essay at the Back to Bloomsbury Conference, I was in an auditorium in Bloomsbury, indicative of the both/and nature not only of the VWOOLF list but of mailing lists on specialised topics in general, which often complement their online talk with yearly conferences that in turn generate more online talk; both play a role in constituting Woolf's virtual publics. For network theorists, this ongoing conversation deconstructs the false distinction between cyberspace and physical space, for the ties we have to the other participants in our networks operate in both places, using 'whatever means of communication is convenient and appropriate at the moment' (Wellman, 2001, p. 18).

Does all this talk turn VWOOLF into a contemporary Bloomsbury? If one thinks of Bloomsbury as the closely knit group of core members, no. To the extent that the talk forges networks and communities and publics that are imbricated in the intellectual and artistic and cultural questions of the day, perhaps. This leads me to a somewhat different question: whether the conversations occurring in the virtual realm will, as Bloomsbury's private and public conversations did, help shape our literary and cultural discourses. Marjorie Perloff would say they already have; Geert Lovink, ever the polemicist, would go even farther, provocatively arguing in an essay called "The Virtual Intellectual" that 'a lively and critical online intellectual life requires the transfer of crucial heritage into the digital public domain' (Lovink, 2003, p. 36). 'It is of no use', he continues, 'to dream up a return to the days gone by of Parisian existentialism, the Bloomsbury set, LA exile intellectuals or the New York Partisan Review crowd. Today's challenge lies in orchestrating radical intercultural exchanges not in closed monocultures' (Lovink, 2003, p. 34). The goal of this democratisation, he concludes, 'is the elimination of all forms of mediated representation and artificial scarcity of channels. There are now the technical possibilities to let people speak for themselves' (Lovink, 2003, p. 38).

Notes

1. See, for example, Ivan Hoffman, '"C" Rights in "E" Mail,' and Brad Templeton, "10 Big Myths about Copyright Explained."
2. See Irene Langner "An Introduction to Internet Mailinglist Research", and Charles Ess "Ethical Decision-Making and Internet Research: Recommendations from the AoIR Ethics Working Committee."
3. My thanks to those who gave me permission to quote their words, and to Anne Fernald, the list owner, for her unstinting help.
4. See also Peter Kollock, "The Economies of Online Cooperation: Gifts and Public Goods in Cyberspace", *Communities in Cyberspace*, eds. Marc A. Smith and Peter Kollock.
5. For Connery this non-consensual aspect of lists creates 'a genuinely public space and a very messy one', a 'free – but unruly – discursive space' (1996, p. 171; p. 177).
6. Hermione Lee notes that Bloomsbury 'persisted as an organism for over thirty or forty years in the form of little overlapping groups and clubs which … sprang up for the purposes of discussions or play-readings or exhibitions or domestic entertainment. During the war Bloomsbury had a meeting-place in the 1917 Club in Gerrard Street, Soho … ' (Lee, 1996, p. 263).
7. See also Nancy Fraser "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy", *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun; Geoff Eley, "Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures: Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth-Century", *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, and Anne E. Fernald, *Virginia Woolf: Feminism and the Reader*.

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